JOHJI MANABE'S
DRAKULIN
VOLUME 3
SHADOW OF THE WARLOCK
ドラクウィン

DRAKUUN

SHADOW OF THE WARLOCK

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DRAKUUN: VOLUME 3—SHADOW OF THE WARLOCK
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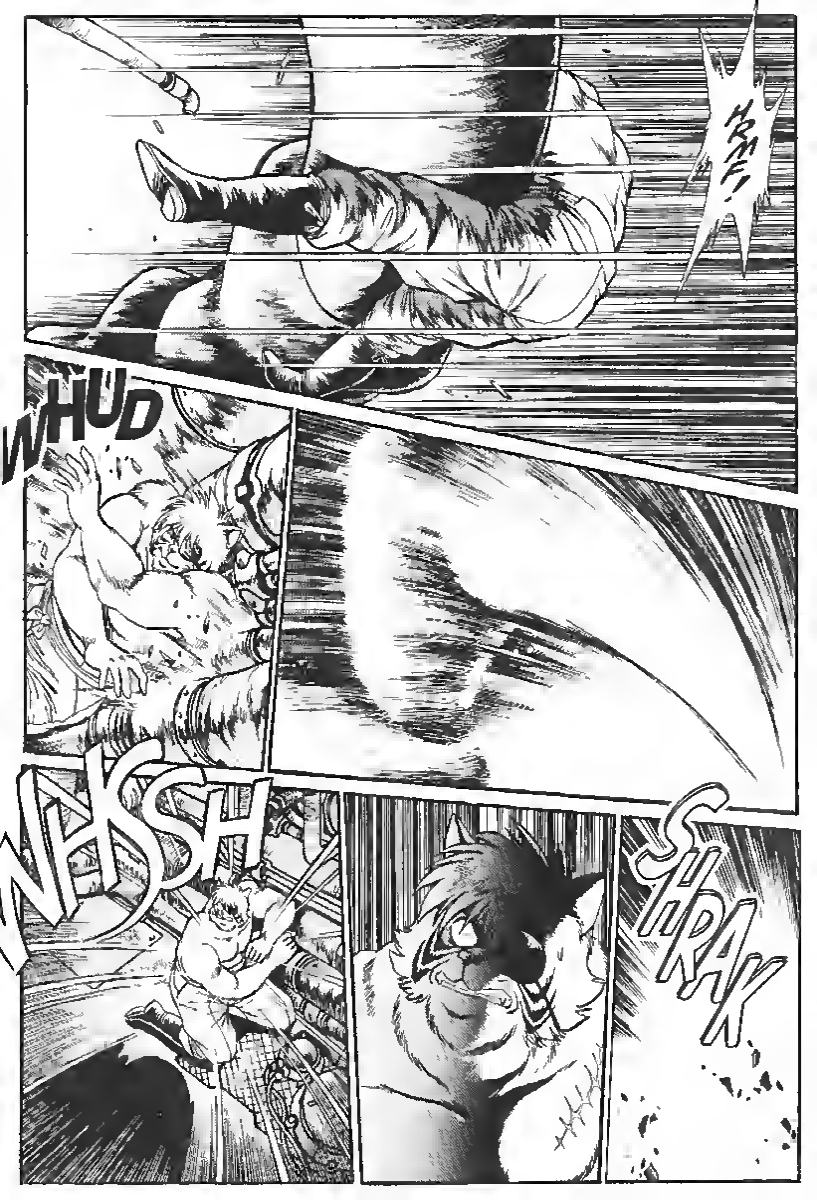
YES... COME TO ME NOW!
MY PRECIOUS SLAVE!

KARULA, NO! DON'T GO!
OPEN YOUR EYES, YOU DAMN FOOL!
KARULA!
SHOUT AND SCREAM TO YOUR HEART'S CONTENT-- YOUR WORDS WILL NOT REACH HER.
THIS WOMAN BELONGS TO ME!
YEAH?! OVER MY DEAD BODY, YOU BASTARD!
AS YOU WISH.


KRF!
WHUD
WHSH
SHRAK

WHRAM!
YO, DARD!
JUST ABOUT WET YOUR PANTS, DIDN'T YA?!
KARULA!

WH-WHY DO YOU TURN AGAINST ME?!
HOW ?!
SO...HOW DOES IT FEEL HAVING YOUR BEST SPELLS BROKEN, HOTSHOT?
I'VE MET WARLOCK GENERALS LIKE YOU ON A *DOZEN* BATTLE-FIELDS!
I'M *IMMUNE* TO YOUR TRICKS!
AND THANKS TO YOU, I'VE GOT THIS FABULOUS SWORD!
IT'S BEEN SWELL, KURGH, BUT NOW IT'S *OVER*!

FWHOOSH
NO!
NO!!
WHOOM
IS THAT THE BEST YOU GOT, BUG?!

SHRAAM
FKOOM
WAY TO GO, BABE !!
SHRED 'IM!
ASK AND YE SHALL RECEIVE!

HRRGH!!
AND NOW... DIE !!

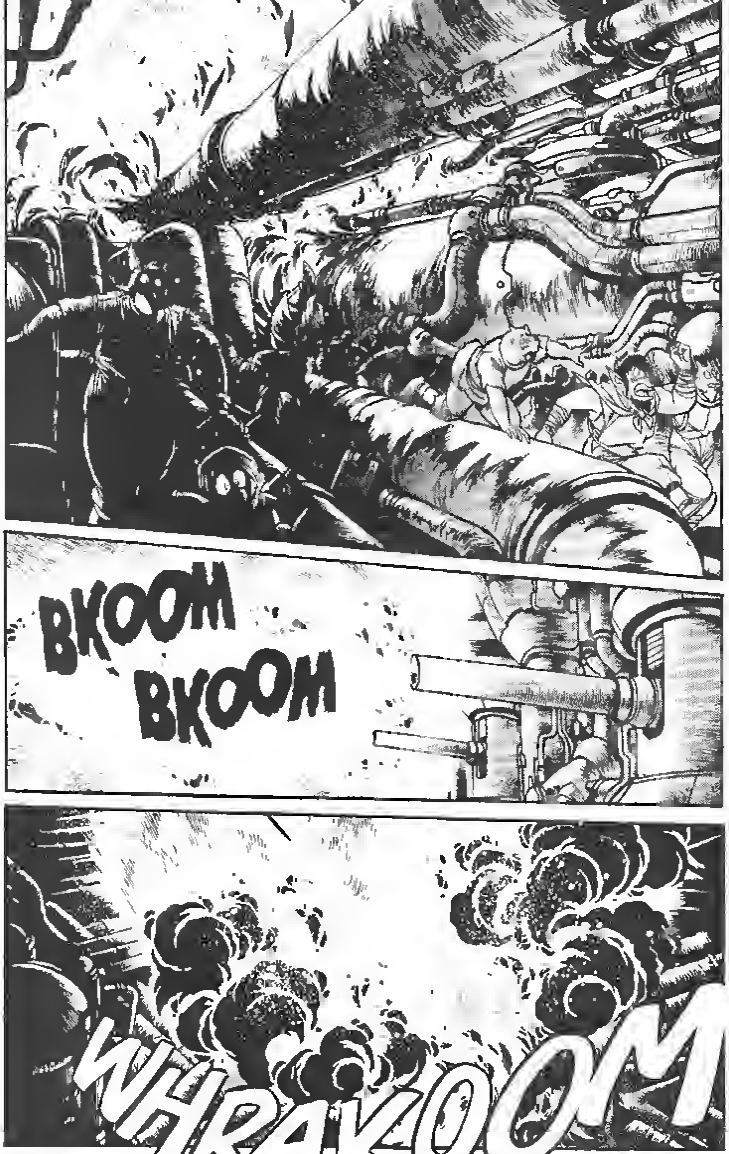
KARULA...?
KARULA !!
BABE! WHAT'S THE PROB?!
YOU OKAY ?!
WHUMP

SPLRSH
BLOOD ?!
KARULA! ARE YOU REALLY--
KOFF
KOFF
HEH HEH HEH... FOOL!
SHE THOUGHT THAT SHE'D TRICKED ME, BUT WHAT MORE COULD YOU EXPECT FROM A STUPID WENCH?
DID SHE REALLY THINK THAT JUST ANYONE COULD WIELD A SORCERER'S SWORD?
WHAT THE HELL DOES THAT MEAN?!

THE SWORD'S ENERGY IS DRAWN FROM THE POWER OF THE ONE WHO USES IT--*THAT* WAS WHY I CHOSE HER!
BECAUSE SHE POSSESSES THE POWER WITHIN *HERSELF!*
YOU BASTARD...!
SO ALL THAT POWER WAS TAKEN FROM KARULA HERSELF...?
AND IF SHE KEPT ON USING IT, SOONER OR LATER...
KARULA! WAKE UP, GIRL!

HEH HEH .. I'M SORRY, BUT YOUR USEFULNESS IS CLEARLY AT AN END.
SHKOOM
DAMN IT!
HEY, DARD !!
YOU GUYS OVERDID IT! YOU'RE GONNA GET US ALL FRIED, CHEN!
THAT ISN'T OUR STUFF! IT'S IMPERIAL WARSHIPS BOMBING THE CITY!
NO SHIT? THE IMPERIALS?
YEP! THEY'RE TRYING TO CLOSE OUR ESCAPE ROUTES!

OKAY, KID-- FOLLOW ME!
ME TOO! ME TOO!
HRM... ?
....
....
YEOWW!


BKOOM
BKOOM
WHRAKOOM

SHOOTS

A FIRE...? IT'S AWFUL BIG...
WHAT THE HELL'S *THAT?*
STRANGE... THERE'S SOME HUGE GLOW FILLING UP THE WESTERN SKY.
THAT'S RADOM ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THOSE HILLS.
WHY DO I FEEL A...A STRANGE...

NOW LOOK HERE, RUA DEAR...
WILL YOU PLEASE JUST--
IT'S BEDTIME, MISTRESS ♡!
ARE YOU OUT OF YOUR MIND?!
THIS IS NO TIME FOR... FOR THAT!
GAK!
OH, WOE IS ME... MY MISTRESS IS BEING SO COLD!
S-STOP SQUEEZING ME LIKE THAT! RUAAA!

MMM...
OH, MISTRESS!! ♡♡♡♡
EEP! I SAID NOT NOW! STOP THAT!

OH, GEEZ... I WENT AND DID IT AGAIN!
AS IF WE DIDN'T HAVE ENOUGH TO WORRY ABOUT!
ZZZZZZ
SIGH... I'M THE ONE WHO GOT HER MIXED UP IN ALL THIS.
AND SHE'S NOT A BAD GIRL...
AA/H... WHAT WAS I THINKING, DOING THIS WITH HER IN THE FIRST PLACE...?

KLIK
PSST!! RUA! COME ON-- GET UP!
>mmPh<
>unh?<
W-WHAT IS IT, ROSALIA... ?
WE'RE SURROUNDED !
FWDD
HUH ?
GET READY FOR ACTION !
CHIK
HERE!
NOW!
SHRAKK

SKRUNK!!
EEK! UNHAND ME !!
MISTRESS !!
BKAM
BKAM
BKAM
C'MON, RUA!! LET'S GO!

BKAM
GIVE IT UP, YOU GUYS!
HAH! GOT 'IM!
RUA! DON'T SHOOT UP THE WHOLE TOWN!

GENERAL... WE'VE MADE CONTACT WITH KARULA...

NO, WAIT... FORGIVE ME. IT APPEARS TO BE QUEEN ROSALIA.
ROSALIA?! BUT I HEARD SHE DIED IN KURGH'S DUNGEONS!
TWO SISTERS... ONE BLOOD...I APOLOGIZE, LORD--THEIR PSI-SIGNATURES APPEAR TO HAVE CROSSED.
WELL, THAT'S FINE, ANYWAY. CONTINUE TO MONITOR ROSALIA. WE'LL JUST TRACK DOWN KARULA THROUGH HER SISTER.
I HAVE A BAD FEELING ABOUT ALL OF THIS...
I'M WORRIED ABOUT HIS HIGHNESS GUSTAV AND PRINCESS MINERVA. I PRAY THEY'RE ALL RIGHT.
BUT IS NOT THE PRINCESS AND YOUR BROTHER KRAISIS THERE TO PROTECT HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS...?
MY BROTHER, EH ?
I SHOULDN'T SAY THIS OF MY OWN OLDER BROTHER...
...BUT I NO LONGER TRUST HIM.

MY BROTHER IS ALWAYS COMPLAINING TO ME ABOUT HIS POSITION IN THE COURT...
...AND HE'S SPENT TOO MUCH TIME IN KURGH'S FORTRESS.
IF KURGH HAS NOTICED MY BROTHER'S DISSATISFACTION, THEN HE MAY HAVE ALREADY GAINED KRAISIS' COOPERATION IN HIS FOUL STRATAGEMS.
....
....
EVERYTHING IS SO QUIET...
AND YET, I FEEL SUCH AGITATION IN MY SOUL! I HOPE IT'S ONLY MY NERVES...

OH! MISS KARULA!
HEY, BABE... YOU FINALLY WOKE UP, EH?
I... HOW'D I GET--
LATER, KARULA. FOR NOW YOU'D BETTER JUST GET SOME REST.
OH, JOY IS ME!

I GUESS YOU WERE ALL PRETTY WORRIED ABOUT ME.
I'M SORRY.
AW, THAT'S OKAY, MA'AM! YOU'RE SO TOUGH I WASN'T WORRIED ABOUT A THING!
IT'S TRUE, IT'S TRUE! STRONG IS GOOD!
MY SWORD...?
WH-WHERE'S MY SWORD?!
....
I TOSSED IT!
YOU DID WHAT?!
YOU JUST THREW IT--
OW OW OWW!!!
GRAB A BRAIN, SWEET CHUNKS--THANKS TO THAT DAMN SWORD, YOU'RE IN PRETTY BAD SHAPE. JUST FORGET THE DAMN THING!

DAMMIT, DARD! I CAN'T DO THAT!
I'VE STILL GOT TO FIGHT THE EMPIRE--THAT STINKING KURGH IS STILL ALIVE! I NEED THAT SWORD, UNDERSTAND?!
YOU DON'T THINK I CAN MASTER IT?
WELL, I COULD, BUT NOW I CAN'T PROVE IT!! DAMN IT ALL, DARD--THAT WAS A STUPID MOVE!
....
?
DARD...?
UH-OH... HE LOOKS MAD...
WHY DO YOU ALWAYS HAVE TO BE LIKE THAT?

HUH ?
WHY DO YOU ALWAYS WANT TO DO EVERY DAMN THING BY YOUR OWN DAMN SELF?!
LOOK... I KNOW YOU'RE TOUGH! BUT THERE'S A *LIMIT* TO WHAT ONE PERSON CAN DO!
ESPECIALLY IF WE'RE TALKING ABOUT THE *ENTIRE IMPERIAL ARMY!*
I... I JUST..
I JUST CAN'T TAKE IT ANYMORE.
I CAN'T STAND ANY MORE PEOPLE DYING.
IF IT'S JUST MY LIFE AT STAKE, THEN--
YOU LITTLE FOOL !

YOU THINK MAKING A SACRIFICE OF YOURSELF WILL MAKE EVERYTHING OKAY?!
THERE ARE PEOPLE WHO'D FIND LOSING YOU WORSE THAN DEATH ITSELF!
YOUR SISTER, YOUR FATHER...
...CHEN... MASAHIKO... AND ME.
HAVE YOU EVER THOUGHT ABOUT ANY OF US? EH?! HAVE YOU?!
snff
snff
WAAH!
AHH, C'MON-- DON'T CRY.
JUST REMEMBER THAT, OKAY?

OH, DARD-- I'VE BEEN SO AFRAID!
AFRAID I'D LOSE MORE OF MY FRIENDS...
AFRAID I'D BE ALL ALONE...
KARULA...
COME ON, MASAHIKO... LET'S TAKE A WALK.
HUH? WHY? HOW COME WE GOTTA GO?

KARULA...?
AH, IT'S NOTHIN', BUT... JUST, IF THIS ALL WORKS OUT...
YEAH?
NOW WHAT?
...HOW'D YA LIKE TO COME SEE MY HOME COUNTRY WITH ME?
HMM...?
WAIT A SEC...
DON'T TELL ME...
YOU JUST *PROPOSED* TO ME?!
YOU *DID*, DIDN'T YOU?!
YOU BIG LUG-- JUST *SAY* IT!
AW, SHUDDUP. I WAS JUST TRYING IT ON FOR SIZE!

SAY, HON...
THAT COUNTRY OF YOURS... WHAT'S IT LIKE?
WE'RE SURROUNDED BY WATER, WATER EVERYWHERE.
WHAT DO YOUR PEOPLE DO?
WELL, MY FAMILY'S ALWAYS BEEN FISHERMEN.
A FISHERMAN'S WIFE, HMM?
A SIMPLE, HONEST LIFE... IT'S LIKE A DREAM!
A GOOD DREAM, I HOPE.
UH-HUH... IF I HAD A HUSBAND I COULD COUNT ON!
HEE HEE
OOH... NNG...

HEY! IS THERE SOMEONE ELSE IN HERE? IT SOUNDED LIKE A WOMAN!
=ulp!=
WELL, UH, ACTUALLY...
HOW TO EXPLAIN THIS...? HMM...
AA AH?!
WHAT THE HELL IS THIS?! WHAT'S THAT DAMN MINERVA DOING HERE?!
AND YOU BETTER NOT HAVE BEEN--
IT AIN'T LIKE THAT! SHE WAS HURT REAL BAD, SO I GRABBED HER!

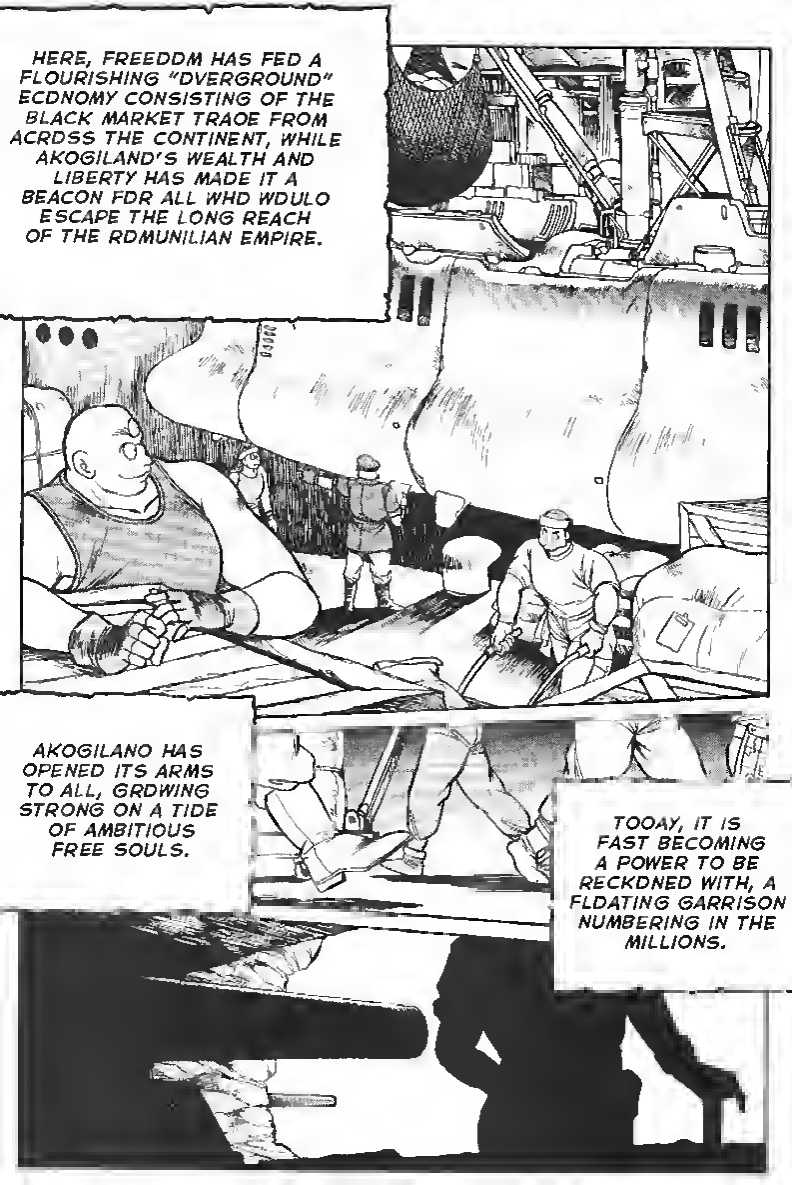
!!
KARULA ?! WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU DOING HERE ?!
THOSE ARE MY LINES, BITCH!
I'LL CHOKE THE LIFE OUT OF YOU, YOU LEDOMIAM SCUM !!
SO?! THE SLIMY OLD OCTOPUS DESERVED TO DIE!
GET YOUR PAWS OFFA--
YOU IURDERED MY FATHER !

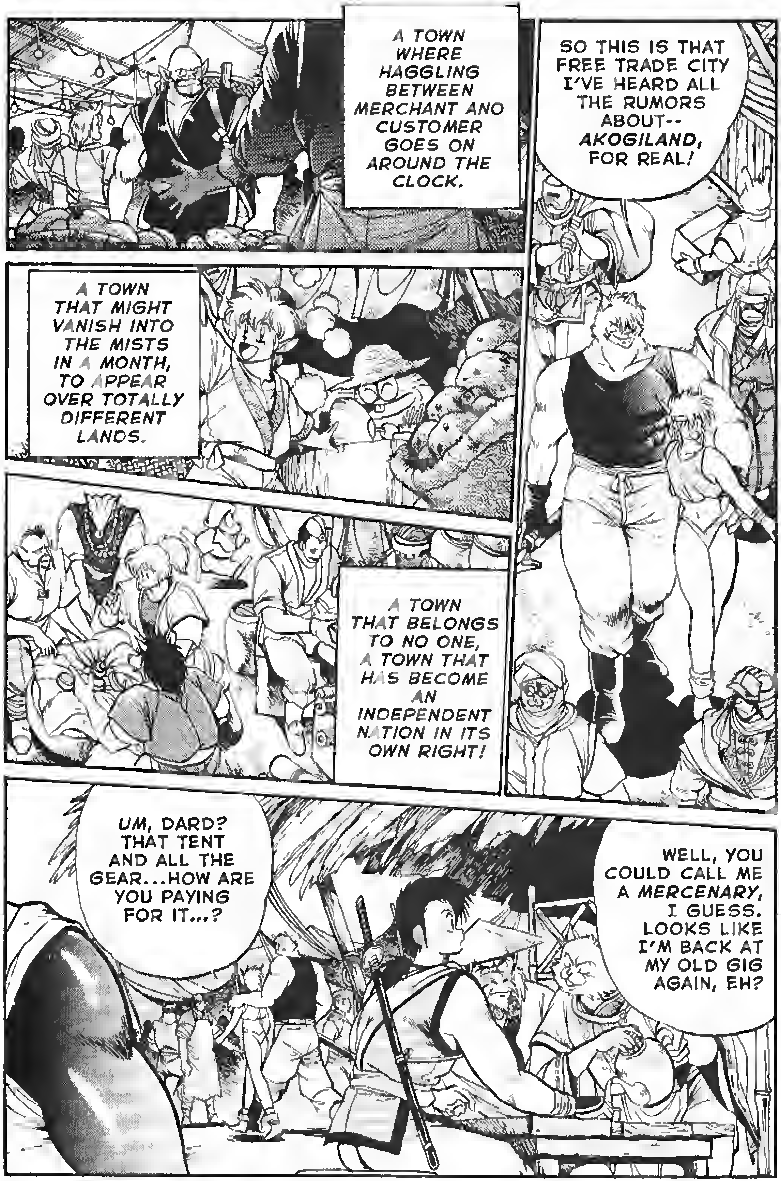
EEEK
HEY! HEYY! PUT ME DDWN! DAAARD !!
DAMN IT ALL, LADIES--CAN'T YOU STUFF A SOCK IN IT UNTIL MORNING?
SILENCE! YOU THINK I'LL DO NOTHING WHILE MY FATHER'S MURDERER STANDS IN FRONT OF ME?!
WHAM
KLUD
HEY, AIN'T YDU BABES EVER HEARD THAT SAYING "MAKE LOVE, NOT WAR"...?
YOU FILTHY DDG !!
UNHAND ME, YOU SWINE !
GODDAMMIT! WOULD YOU VIXENS CUT THAT OUT?! IT HURTS!!

SKRASH
OH, DEAR! VIOLENCE IS BAD! CAN'T WE ALL JUST GET ALONG...?!
SPANGG
WILL YOU PLEASE BE QUIET!!!
WHAT TIME DO YOU THINK IT IS, ANYWAY! WE GOTTA GET UP EARLY, YA KNOW!
HEY, SORRY, MAN, I JUST KINDA FORGOT--
IF YOU'RE GONNA KEEP A COUPLE OF BIMBOS IN YOUR ROOM, AT LEAST TRY AND KEEP THEM UNDER CONTROL!
HUH ?
DON'T TELL ME...

ALL RIGHT!! COOL!!
FLOATING ABOVE THE GRIFFELL CONTINENT, BLOWN BY THE WIND.. FLOATING EMPORIUM OF PLEASURE. FREEHOLD OF LIBERTY. CESSPOOL OF LAWLESSNESS...

SO THIS IS...
AKOGILAND!
YES, MY FRIENDS...AKOGILAND! THAT INFAMOUS CITY-STATE BUILT ATOP A DRIFTING ISLAND. BY ITS VERY NATURE (NEVER ACTUALLY KNOWING WHERE THE HECK IT WOULD BE NEXT...), IT IS ONE OF A HANDFUL OF INDEPENDENT NATIONS STILL FREE OF THE EMPIRE'S IRON FIST.


HERE, FREEDDM HAS FED A FLOURISHING "DVERGROUND" ECDNOMY CONSISTING OF THE BLACK MARKET TRADE FROM ACRDSS THE CONTINENT, WHILE AKOGILAND'S WEALTH AND LIBERTY HAS MADE IT A BEACON FDR ALL WHD WDULD ESCAPE THE LONG REACH OF THE RDMUNILIAN EMPIRE.
AKOGILANO HAS OPENED ITS ARMS TO ALL, GRDWING STRONG ON A TIDE OF AMBITIOUS FREE SOULS.
TOOAY, IT IS FAST BECOMING A POWER TO BE RECKDNED WITH, A FLDATING GARRISON NUMBERING IN THE MILLIONS.


A TOWN WHERE HAGGLING BETWEEN MERCHANT AND CUSTOMER GOES ON AROUND THE CLOCK.
SO THIS IS THAT FREE TRADE CITY I'VE HEARD ALL THE RUMORS ABOUT-- AKOGILAND, FOR REAL!
A TOWN THAT MIGHT VANISH INTO THE MISTS IN A MONTH, TO APPEAR OVER TOTALLY DIFFERENT LANDS.
A TOWN THAT BELONGS TO NO ONE, A TOWN THAT HAS BECOME AN INDEPENDENT NATION IN ITS OWN RIGHT!
UM, DARD? THAT TENT AND ALL THE GEAR...HOW ARE YOU PAYING FOR IT...?
WELL, YOU COULD CALL ME A MERCENARY, I GUESS. LOOKS LIKE I'M BACK AT MY OLD GIG AGAIN, EH?

YO, DARD, MY MAN! THE LITTLE LADY'S ALL BETTER NOW, HUH?
LOOKS GOOD, DON'T SHE?
THE NAME'S BAZZ, MA'AM. I'M ONE OF THE RADOM SLAVES YOU GUYS BUSTED OUT. IT'S AN HONOR TO MEET YA, YER HIGHNESS!
JUST CALL ME KARULA, BAZZ.
WHER DO YO COMI FROM
DAMNED IF I KNOW. I BEEN DOWN IN THE MINES SINCE I WAS A BRAT.
HOW AWFUL!
WELL, TIME FOR US TO GO ON PATROL.
LIKE THEY SAY-- THEM AS DON'T WORK, DON'T EAT.
LOTTA GOOD SENSE IN THEM OLE SAYINGS.
SO WHAT AM I SUPPOSED TO DO, HEY?
JUST SHOP OR SOMETHIN', GIRL.
AND NO FIGHTING, YOU HEAR?!
I'LL STOP FIGHTING AS SOON AS YOU STOP PAWING OTHER WOMEN, PAL!
CALM DOWN! I JUST DON'T WANT ANY TROUBLE, OKAY?!
BLEAGH!

HMPH! WOULD YOU LISTEN TO THAT GUY? AS IF HE DOESN'T LIKE TO CRACK A FEW SKULLS FOR FUN NOW AND THEN!
IF YOU CAN'T TAKE THE HEAT, DON'T PROPOSE TO THE KITCHEN!
OR SOMETHING LIKE THAT
WELL, ANYWAY... IT IS NICE, JUST HANGING OUT LIKE THIS.
THE WEATHER'S GREAT, AND I LOVE THE ENERGY OF THIS PLACE. NOT A BAD WAY TO LIVE...
AY ME!
OOPS... ?
EEK!
HA HA!
FAP
HA HA! THEY LOOK LIKE A HANDFUL!
GET BACK HERE!
NO WAY!
AAH... A LAND AT PEACE. NOT BAD... NOT BAD AT ALL!

HOW MUCH?! THAT'S HIGHWAY ROBBERY! I CAN GET IT FOR HALF THAT IN LEDOMIAM!
WELL THEN, YOU JUST HUSTLE YOUR LITTLE BUTT OFF TO LEDOMIAM AND BUY IT THERE, TOOTS! I AIN'T BUDGIN'!
!
WHUZZUP, BOBO ?
IT'S THAT GIRL. COULDA SWORN I'VE SEEN HER BEFORE...
"YOU SURE? SHE LOOKS LIKE YOUR TYPICAL COUNTRY WENCH TO ME."

THERE'S ALL KINDS OF DRIFTERS COMING INTO AKOGILAND. WHAT'S SO WEIRD ABOUT SEEING SOMEONE YOU KNOW?
YOU BIRD-BRAIN! IT'S MONEY! SHE SMELLS LIKE MONEY, MAN!
I'M SURE OF IT. SHE'S GONNA BE OUR MEAL TICKET, I TELL YOU.
YOU'VE BEEN HERE TOO LONG-- YOU'RE TALKING LIKE AN AKOGI, BOBO.
I'M CHECKING HER OUT ANYWAY! COME ON!
WAI--
MAN WHAT A PAIN...
BLUB
BLUP
AH, WELL... CLOSE ENOUGH.
HMM...

YOU'LL LOVE IT, DARLING!
NOW, THERE'S A HAPPY FACE... SHE LOOKS LIKE A GIRL AGAIN.
SMILES SUIT YOU, BABE...YOU CAN DO A HELL OF A LOT MORE THAN GLARE AND SWING A SWORD!
UMM... DIDN'T YOU CLEAN IT BEFORE YOU PUT IT IN, PRINCESS?
AW, SHUT UP!!
THE FIRE'S TOO HOT, MA'AM!
HARD TO BELIEVE SHE'S SUPPOSED TO RUN A WHOLE COUNTRY. NO WAY...
SOUPS ON, DEAR!
HEY, BLOB... GO GET MINERVA.
BUT...
FORGET HER! LET'S EAT.
CAN'T DO THAT, GIRL. AIN'T FAIR.

HEY, MINERVA! GRUB! COME ON!
I DON'T WANT ANY!
LEAVE ME ALONE!
WHAT'S WRONG? YOUR WOUNDS ACTING UP?
I CAN CALL A VET... HEH, HEH.
ENOUGH OF YOUR INSOLENCE! LEAVE ME!
DON'T ANY OF YOU PRINCESSES GOT ANY DAMN COMMON SENSE?!
EEK!
WHAT ARE YOU DOING, YOU INSOLENT CUR?!
FOOL! UNHAND ME!
YOU WANNA HEAL, YOU GOTTA EAT, SUNSHINE!

UM... YOU'VE STILL GOT FEW THINGS TO LEARN ABOUT COOKING, MA'AM..
OH, YEAH?! IF YOU THINK IT'S SO BAD, DON'T EAT IT!
....
....
....
GR RGL E
GLU
URR RGG
GLE
BLRG GLUGG
GLRG GGLE
S-STOP LAUGHING !!
I ORDER YOU NOT TO LAUGH!!
KLANK
PHEWW

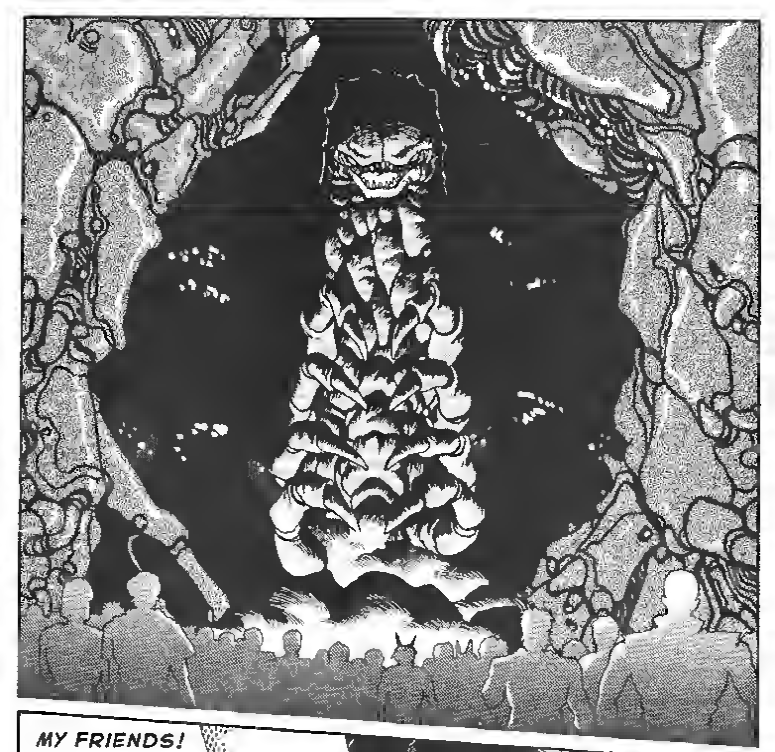
WELL, THAT WAS FOUL!
AND SO... NOW THAT MY HUNGER FOR FOOD IS SATISFIED...
OH, RIGHT! AND WHO ATE THREE TIMES AS MUCH AS ANYBODY ELSE...?
...IT'S TIME TO SLAKE MY HUNGER FOR REVENGE!!
CHUK
WHY YOU--!

KLAK
KANG
TUNG
WILL THE TWO OF YOU PLEASE CUT IT OUT!!
YANK
YEEEOWW!
MIND YOUR OWN BUSINESS!!
CALM DOWN, DAMMIT! DON'T YOU GET IT YET?!
WH... WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
KARULA, YOU LISTEN, TOO! LOOK--THE EMPIRE'S OUT TO KILL BOTH OF YOU!
THAT IS ABSURD, DARD! I UNDERSTAND WHY THEY WANT THIS...THIS CREATURE WHO MURDERED MY FATHER!
BUT I AM NOW THE RIGHTFUL QUEEN OF ROMUNILIA! WHY WOULD THEY WANT TO KILL ME?!
YOU ARE THE QUEEN OF NOTHING, MINERVA.
YOUR COUNTRY NOW BELONGS TO KURGH!

KURGH WAS BEHIND THE WHOLE THING AND YOU KNOW IT!
HE USED KARULA TO TRY TO KILL YOU AND YOUR FATHER, AND TAKE THE THRONE FOR HIMSELF.
WHAT DO YOU THINK THAT SCALY BASTARD WILL DO IF HE LEARNS YOU'RE STILL ALIVE?
.....
SO...IF YOU AND KARULA KILL EACH OTHER HERE, WHO GETS THE LAST LAUGH...?
OUR BUDDY KURGH !
IT... IT'S TRUE.
THEN... KURGH IS MY REAL ENEMY!
VERY WELL, THEN! KARULA !
YEAH? NOW WHAT ?!
YOU HEARD HIM. I'LL LET YOU OFF FOR NOW. BE GRATEFUL!
OH, FOR SURE... WHATEVER YOU SAY.

IN THAT CASE, DARD...
YEAH...?
I THANK YOU FOR YOUR WARNING. ONCE I'VE COMPLETELY RECOVERED, I WILL GO AND DESTROY THAT TRAITOR, KURGH.
THE GUY'S DAMN TOUGH, KIDDO.
DON'T LET PASSION CLOUD YOUR JUDGE-MENT.
YES. THANK YOU.

"WHOA... GENERAL ZORBA OF THE SUPREME MILITARY COUNCIL...
"PRINCE OSTANIA OF SEVASTO...
"FIELD MARSHALL SU TAO... MAN!"
THAT'S GENERAL KURGH FOR YOU, HUH? HE'S GOT EVERY BIG-ASS POLITICO AND MILITARY LEADER ON GRIFFEL COMING TO SEE HIM.
WELL... YOU DIDN'T HEAR IT FROM ME, BUT YOU'D HAVE TO BE CRAZY TO IGNORE HIS INVITATION NOW.
RUMOR HAS IT THE WHOLE IMPERIAL FAMILY'S ON THE RUN.
IT'S "LONG LIVE EMPEROR KURGH," I'LL BET YA.



MY FRIENDS! THANK YOU ALL FOR MAKING THE EXHAUSTING JOURNEY FROM YOUR FAR-FLUNG LANDS.

I HAVE NO WORDS TO EXPRESS MY SORROW AT THE TRAGIC DEATHS OF THE EMPEROR AND PRINCESS MINERVA.

YET WE ARE NOT ALLOWED TIME TO GRIEVE!
WITH HIS MAJESTY'S DEATH, THE EMPIRE HAS BECOME RESTIVE. WE CANNOT ACT A *MOMENT TOO SOON* TO CROWN A NEW EMPEROR, AND ESTABLISH AN IMPREGNABLE IMPERIAL ADMINISTRATION!
AND THUS I ASK YOU, MY DEAR, DEAR FRIENDS...
THIS WORLD LIVES BY *POWER*. ONLY WHEN THE POWERFUL HOLD THE REINS OF GOVERNMENT CAN THE NATION BE PRESERVED. AN EMPEROR IN NAME ONLY *CANNOT* GUIDE US THROUGH THESE PERILOUS TIMES!
...AM I NOT MYSELF AN APPROPRIATE CHOICE TO FILL THE IMPERIAL THRONE?

...!
SO...DO ANY OF YOU... DISAGREE ?!
LONG LIVE EMPEROR KURGH !
LONG LIVE EMPEROR KURGH!
GLORY TO ROMUNILIA !
GLORY TO OUR MAJESTY, EMPEROR KURGH!

HOORAH!
HOORAH!
WAIT !!
?!
THIS DISASTER WHICH BEFELL OUR EMPEROR CAME ABOUT AS PART OF *YOUR* SCHEME TO ASSASSINATE
K'RULA, GENERAL KURGH!
YOU SHOULD BE ANSWERING FOR YOUR CRIMES TO A WAR TRIBUNAL! WHAT TREACHERY IS THIS TO *CLAIM THE THRONE?!*

LORD KREITAS, YOU MUST DESIST! THERE ARE LIMITS TO IMPUDENCE!
WHAT?! ARE YOU ALL LILY-LIVERED COWARDS ?!
IT WAS ALL KURGH'S PLOT TO TOPPLE HIS MAJESTY!
ARE YOU SO BLIND, WEAK, AND DEGENERATE YOU CANNOT SEE?!
ENOUGH !
ARE YOU QUITE FINISHED, KREITAS?
DON'T YOU KNOW IT WAS YOUR BROTHER, KRAISIS, WHO MURDERED PRINCESS MINERVA?!
NNG !
B-BUT...YOU TRICKED MY BROTHER! IT WAS YOU WHO WAS BEHIND IT!

SILENCE, KREITAS!
HOW DARE THE BROTHER OF A KNOWN TRAITOR SHOW HIS FACE HERE! BEGONE! BEFORE I LOSE MY TEMPER!
LORD KREITAS... HIS MAJESTY HAS SPOKEN!
...
...
DAMN!
...!!

DOLPH!
YES, MAJESTY?!
WILL NO ONE RID ME OF THIS TROUBLESOME LORD...?
YOUR HIGHNESS!
HARDIN--WE'RE LEAVING THE CASTLE! I CANNOT STOMACH THIS FOUL PIT ANY LONGER!
YES, MY--
AAIGH!!!

HARDIN!
JIGAN!
SHRAK
HERE TO DO KURGH'S DIRTY WORK, EH?!

WHK
FZZAK
HNNG!

WHSH
KLOK
SSSSS
WHUD

ARE YOU HURT, LORD?
WH--WHO ARE YOU?
RUFUS, OF THE IMPERIAL PALACE GUARDS.
NOW YOU MUST TRUST ME AND LET ME HELP YOU. MORE ASSASSINS WILL SURELY BE ON THE WAY.
BUT... WHY ARE YOU HELPING ME?
LET US MERELY SAY THAT I AM IMPRESSED BY COURAGE. YOU SPOKE THE TRUTH WHEN EVERY OTHER LEADER IN THE LAND WAS BENDING OVER FOR KURGH!
I'M A LUCKY MAN. I NEVER THOUGHT I'D MEET A TRULY FAITHFUL RETAINER IN THIS DEN OF INIQUITOUS TOADS.

GENERAL!
WHAT HAPPENED?!
LATER! WE MUST LEAVE BELGORAND AT ONCE! KURGH'S MEN WILL BE HERE ANY MINUTE!
THEN, JUST AS YOU SUSPECTED, GENERAL KURGH...?
USE MY SHIP FOR NOW--THEY WON'T SEARCH THERE.
YOU HAVE MY THANKS...
DAMNATION! KURGH, YOU BASTARD! I SHALL NEVER FORGET THIS!

OOH...
OH, DARD...
JUST...
JUST LET ME...
...CATCH MY BREATH FOR A SECOND.
SLR SLRP
AW, DARD! HEE, HEE, THAT TICKLES!
OH... OOH!
AAH!!

WILL YOU PIPE DOWN IN HERE?!
AARGH! AT IT LIKE WEASELS NIGHT AFTER NIGHT! THINK ABOUT OTHER PEOPLE FOR ONCE!
YOU... YOU LITTLE NYMPHO!
WHAT'S YOUR PROBLEM? IT FEELS GOOD, SO...
THAT'S NOT THE POINT!
AT LEAST BE QUIET ABOUT IT, DAMMIT! I CAN'T SLEEP!
I SWEAR I HAVEN'T GOTTEN A DECENT NIGHT'S SLEEP SINCE I GOT HERE!
JEEZ... WHAT'S SHE SO PISSED OFF ABOUT?
JUST HORNY AS HELL, I BET.
I AM NOT!!

DAMN IT ALL... I'D BE BETTER OFF SLEEPING IN A DUMPSTER SOMEWHERE!
Hnngh!
SO KURGH'S THE NEW EMPEROR, HUH?
WELL, MAKES SENSE, DON'T IT? HE'S GOT THE POWER.
YEAH, AND I HEARD HE SNUFFED EVERYONE WHO DIDN'T SEE IT THAT WAY, TOO.
WHOA! THAT'S HARSH, MAN.
EMPEROR GUSTAV ALWAYS WENT EASY ON AKOGILAND, BUT I DON'T KNOW ABOUT THIS KURGH DUDE...
KURGH?! ON THE THRONE ?!

ANOTHER DAY, ANOTHER DOLLAR!
THE CUSTOMER IS GOD!
SO I CAN'T STOP YA, HUH?
YOU CAN'T. MY WOUNDS HAVE HEALED. AND WITH KURGH DECLARING HIMSELF EMPEROR, I HAVE NO TIME TO WASTE.
SO WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL? JUST LEAVE, ALREADY. IT'LL SURE SAVE ON OUR FOOD BILL.
!

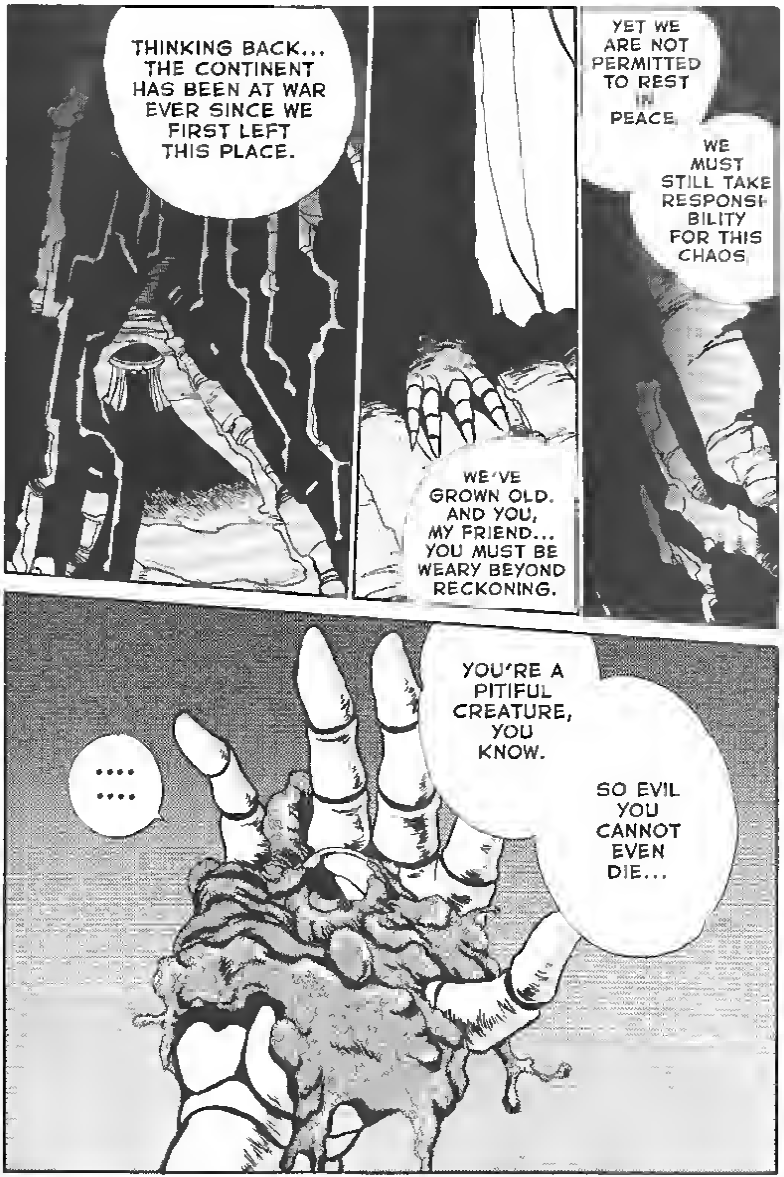
YOU'RE GONNA GO STOMPING INTO THE CASTLE SINGLE-HANDED? THAT'S EXACTLY WHAT THE BIG CATERPILLAR *WANTS*, GIRL.
SO I'M TO LET HIM STEAL THE THRONE?!
OW OW YOWCH !
YOU SEEM *SUSPI-CIOUSLY* CONCERNED ABOUT HER, MY DEAR.
THE HELL I AM! I JUST DON'T WANT HER THROWING HER LIFE AWAY!
WHSST
REMEMBER THIS, PRINCESS !
GRR!
THE NEXT TIME WE MEET WILL BE THE LAST, KARULA OF LEDOMIAM! YOUR HEAD WILL BE MINE!

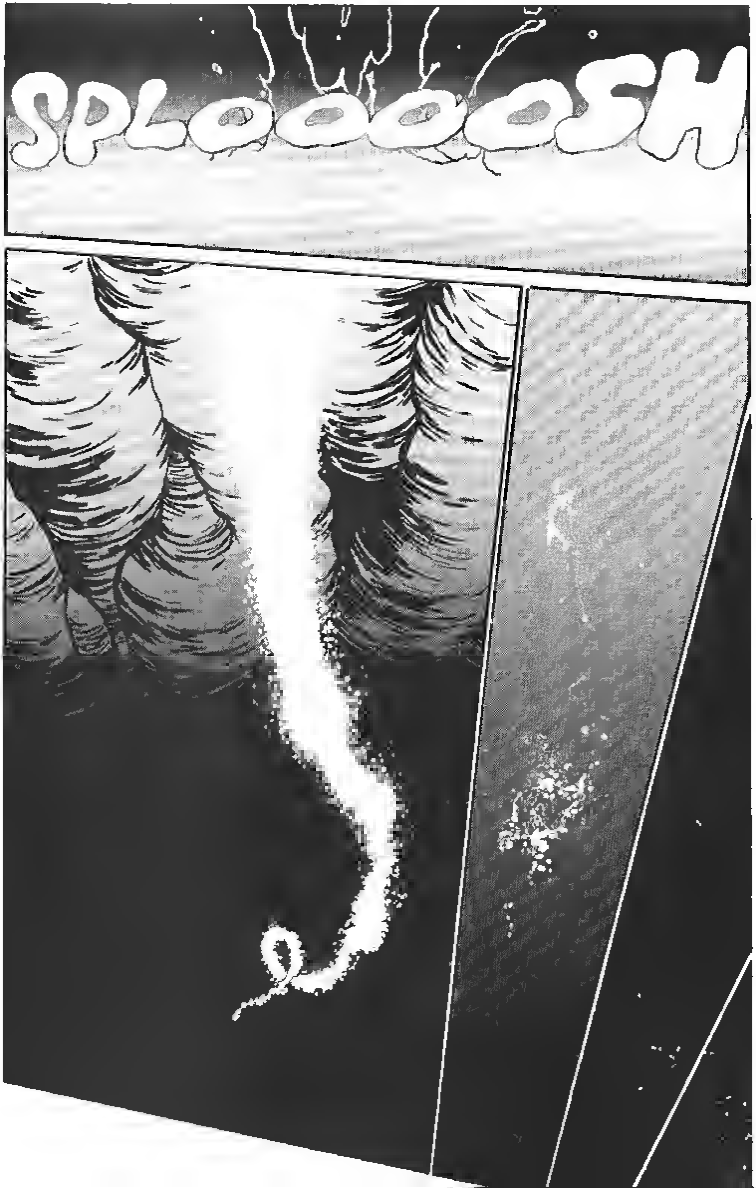
YOU WISH! I DON'T KNOW WHAT'S BIGGER-- YOUR MOUTH OR YOUR FAT BUTT!
YOU WANT TO FIGHT? GREAT! I'LL TAKE YOU ON RIGHT NOW! YOU... YOU...
...SQUID GIRL!
ARE YOU LISTENING TO ME? HEY!! GET BACK HERE! ME AND YOU!
CHEN! I WANT HER ROOM STERILIZED AND THE BEDDING BURNED!
YES, MA'AM!
....
....
VRMMMM

WHAT?! PRINCESS KARULA? ARE YOU SURE?
WHSSSHHH
YOU BETCHA, BOSS!
IT'S HER AN' NO MISTAKE!
WE THOUGHT, DAMN, WE SEEN THAT CHICKADEE SOMEWHERE BEFORE. BUT WHO'DA THOUGHT THERE WAS MONEY ON HER HEAD...!
I'M SURE. AND IS THERE ANYONE IN LEAGUE WITH HER?
WE'RE SHOCKED, SHOCKED, I TELL YOU!

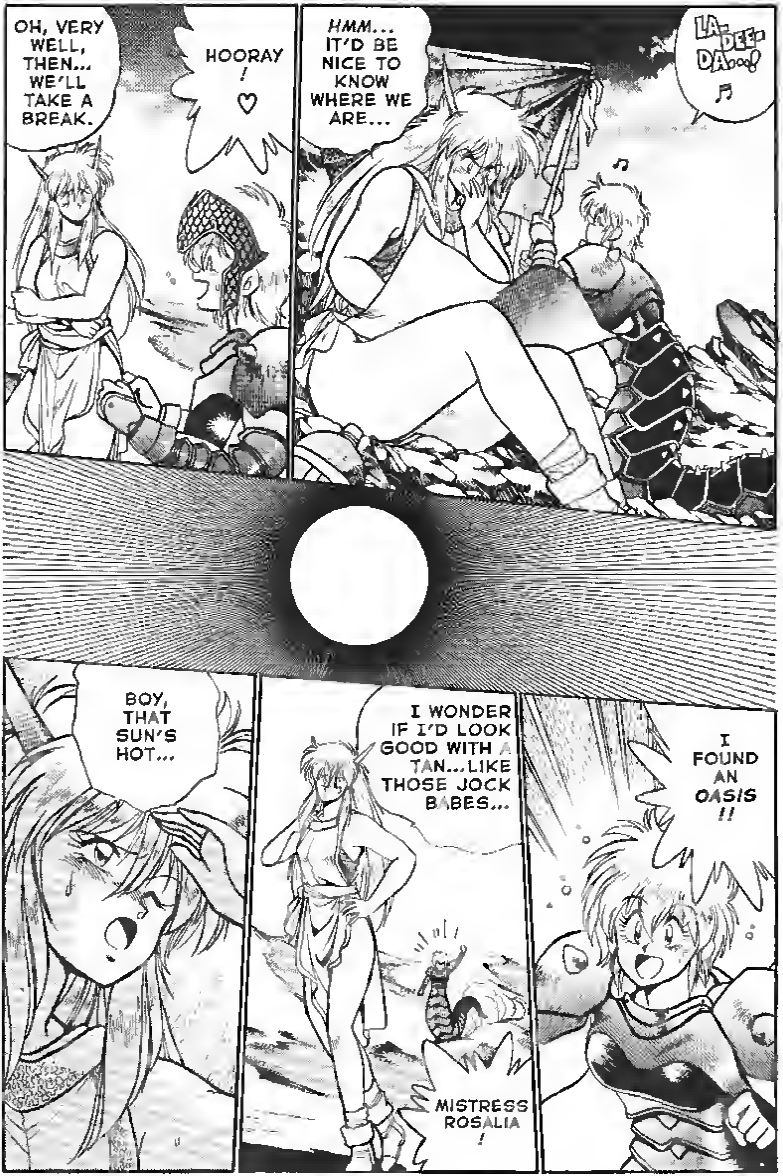
UH, LEMME THINK. WELL, THERE'S A BIG KADOM GUY, WORKS AS A MERCENARY...AND A KID, LOOKS LIKE SHAMU TRIBE TO ME. AND ONE OF THOSE BLOBBY NOSJIR THINGIES...UH...
OH YEAH! THERE'S ANOTHER BABE WITH HER, TOO!
YA LUGHEAD! THEY AIN'T PALS! THEY IS ALWAYS FIGHTING!
SO WHO CARES, FROG BRAIN?! THEY'RE STAYING IN THE SAME DAMN TENT!
A FEMALE? ANOTHER SWORDS-WOMAN...?
HELL, SIR, DON'T KNOW...MAYBE. SHE GOT LONG, BLACK HAIR, AN' HER SKIN'S REAL DARK, TOO!
NEVER SEEN NOTHIN' LIKE IT. WHAT RACE OF BABE YOU FIGURE THAT IS?
CAPTAIN! IT SEEMS IMPOSSIBLE, BUT DO YOU THINK...?
YESSSS... PERHAPS. THEY NEVER DID FIND HER BODY IN RADOM...
IF I BRING IN PRINCESS MINERVA'S HEAD AS WELL...NO REWARD WILL BE BEYOND MY GRASP!
SPLENDID! GUIDE US TO AKOGILAND. IF WE TAKE THEM BOTH, YOU SHALL GET FIVE THOUSAND KOYAK OF GOLD!
THANKEE, SIR!

GRUNNN
SO QUIET... THESE DAYS, THIS CALM IS NOT TO BE FOUND ANYWHERE ELSE IN GRIFFEL.


THINKING BACK... THE CONTINENT HAS BEEN AT WAR EVER SINCE WE FIRST LEFT THIS PLACE.
WE'VE GROWN OLD. AND YOU, MY FRIEND... YOU MUST BE WEARY BEYOND RECKONING.
YET WE ARE NOT PERMITTED TO REST IN PEACE.
WE MUST STILL TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR THIS CHAOS.
....
....
YOU'RE A PITIFUL CREATURE, YOU KNOW.
SO EVIL YOU CANNOT EVEN DIE...


SPLOOOOSH

MISTRESS ROSALIA! WAIT FOR ME!
AHHH... I CAN'T CRAWL ANOTHER FOOT!
OH, FOR HEAVEN'S SAKE! PULL YOURSELF TOGETHER, RUA--YOU'RE A SOLDIER!
WAAAH!
B-BUT WE HAVEN'T EATEN ANYTHING SINCE MORNING AND I'VE BEEN CRAWLING FOR HOURS OVER NOTHING BUT SAND AND STONES AND--


OH, VERY WELL, THEN... WE'LL TAKE A BREAK.
HOORAY ! ♡
HMM... IT'D BE NICE TO KNOW WHERE WE ARE...
LA-DEE-DA-boo♪
BOY, THAT SUN'S HOT...
I WONDER IF I'D LOOK GOOD WITH A TAN...LIKE THOSE JOCK BABES...
MISTRESS ROSALIA !
I FOUND AN OASIS !!

ALL RIGHT !!
WATER! COOL CLEAR WATER!!
FWHOOOSH
YAHOO!
KBLOOSH
HAAH!

OOH, IT'S SO COOL AND REFRESHING... I FEEL *REBORN!!*
MISTRESS... YOUR SKIN IS SO LOVELY...
OH, *STOP*...
KONK
CUT IT OUT!
CAN'T YOU THINK ABOUT ANYTHING ELSE?
BUT, LIKE, WHAT ELSE IS THERE TO *DD*...?

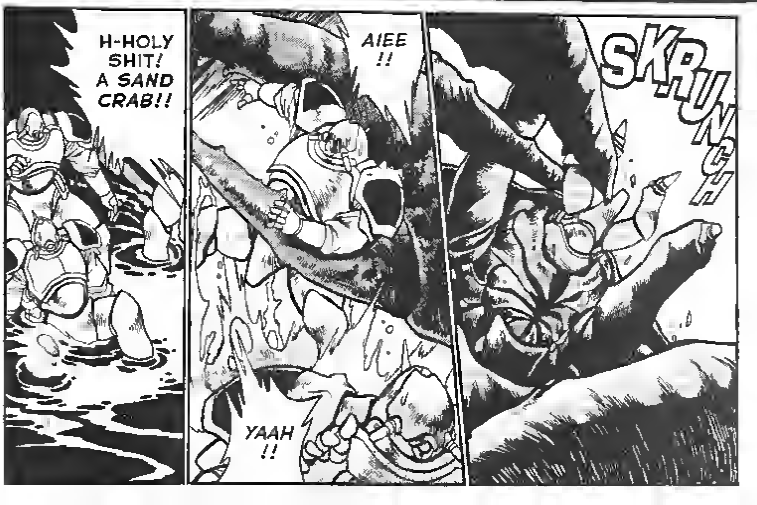
MMPH ?!
AAAH
BUT...BUT REALLY, RUA... *WE CAN'T*... WHAT IF IMPERIAL SOLDIERS FIND US...?
WE'RE IN THE MIDDLE OF THE *DESERT*, MISTRESS. THEY WON'T WASTE THEIR TIME LOOKING *HERE!*
SPLSSSH
SPLSSSH
YOU... OOH...
YEAH... UNFORTUNATELY, *WE DON'T* HAVE ANY TIME TO WASTE!
SEE? WHAT DID I TELL YOU?
OOPS...!

HMPH! IT'S JUST LIKE YOU IMPERIALS TO BOTHER WOMEN WHEN THEY'RE BATHING.
YEAH, IT'S A TOUGH JOB BUT SOMEBODY'S GOT TO DO IT. GOOD FOR THE OLD EYES, THOUGH.
BKAM
BUDDA
EEK!
DON'T EVEN TRY, SNAKE GIRL. WE DIDN'T HEAR NOTHING ABOUT BRINGING YOU IN.
HELL, MIGHT AS WELL SHOOT YA AND SKIN YA RIGHT HERE.
OH NO YOU DON'T! IT'S ME YOU WANT, RIGHT?!
DON'T YOU LAY A HAND ON RUA !
MISTRESS !!

PLEASE... DON'T....
NO !!
DON'T YOU DARE TOUCH ME !!
PRINCESS ROSALIA !
HEY, ME TOO!
HEY, MAN... YOU SURE THIS IS COOL? SHE'S GONN. BE THE EMPEROR'S NEW WIFE, AIN'T SHE?
HELL, HOW'S THE OLD CENTIPEDE GONNA KNOW? BESIDES, WE DESERVE SOME SPECIAL OVERTIME PAY FOR THIS...
NO! NO !!
NO!! HELLP !
MISTRESS ROSALIA !!

GBLOOOSH
WHAT DA HELL ?!
SLOOOOSH

BKAM
BKAM
HRRG!
GRNCH
KRAK-MNCH
SKRUNCH
THIS WASN'T AN OASIS... IT WAS A SAND CRAB FEEDING PIT!
MISTRESS!!
RUA!!
RUA?!!
WAAH! HELP!! SAVE ME, MISTRESS!!


H-HOLY SHIT! A SAND CRAB!!
AIEE !!
SKRUNCH
YAAH !!

LEMME GO, YOU BIG MEANIE!!
EEAKK
RUA !!
FWHAM

SPLASH
I DID IT!! HEAR ME RDAR!!
EEEK! MY CLOTHES !!
THIS IS SO EMBARRASSING.

GRKKK!!
RUA!! THEY'RE RETREATING!
ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?! DID HE HURT YOU?!
MISTRESS....?
WOW!! YOU'RE AWESOME, MISTRESS ROSALIA! I NEVER KNEW YOU COULD DO REAL MAGIC!!
WELL, UM... NEITHER DID I, ACTUALLY... I MEAN, USUALLY I JUST HEAL INJURIES AND STUFF..
I...I NEVER TRIED WAR MAGIC BEFORE...
ANYWAY, WE'D BETTER GET OUT OF HERE. THAT WOUNDED CRAB MAY COME BACK, RIGHT?
LET'S GO!

WAIT A SEC, OKAY...?
HUH? DID YOU FORGET SOMETHING?
WAIT! WHA-- ARE YOU CRAZY, PRINCESS?!

HE'S STILL ALIVE! I CAN SAVE HIM!
"SAVE HIM"...?
SAVE HIM?! YOU MEAN THIS SAND CRAB?!
RUA, WE OWE HIM OUR LIVES! I HAD TO BLAST HIM TO SAVE YOU, BUT HE DIDN'T MEAN TO DO ANYTHING BAD...
...HE WAS JUST FOLLOWING HIS INSTINCTS, RIGHT?
FORGIVE ME. I'LL MAKE YOU WHOLE AGAIN, I PROMISE...
fzzakk
SHE'S SO SWEET! ♡

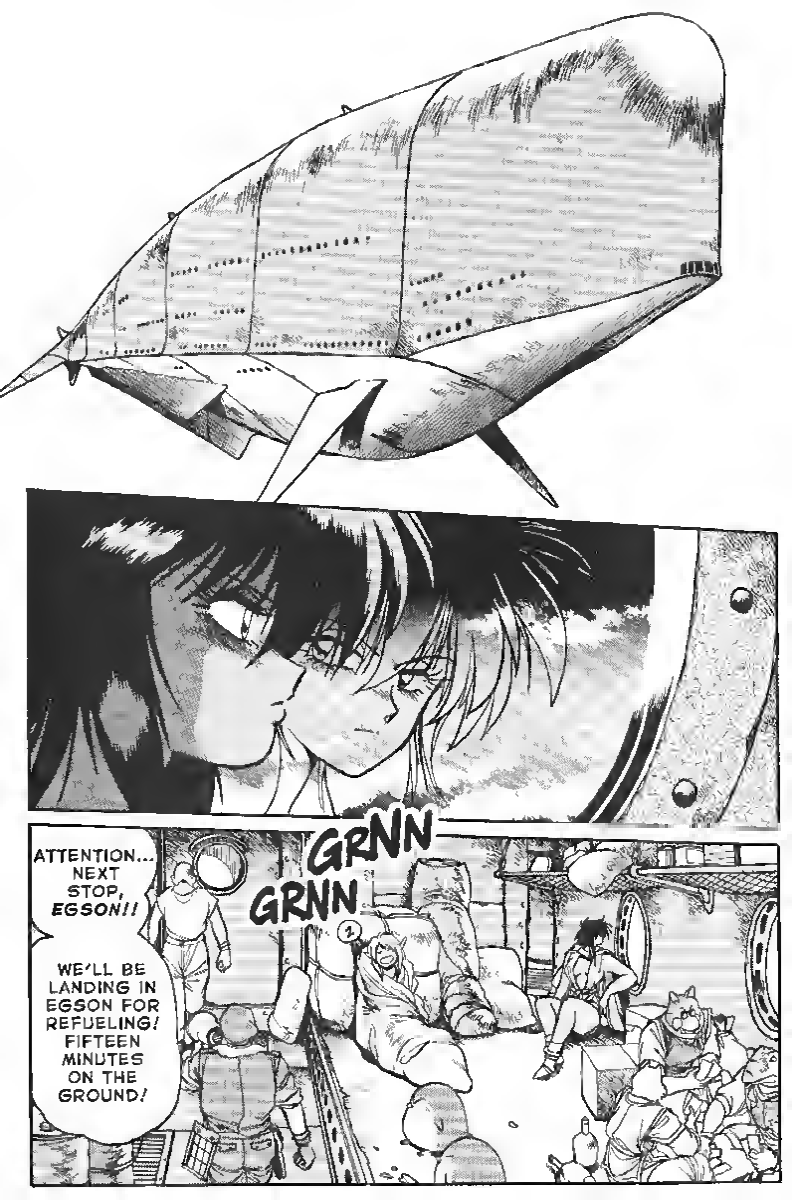
MM...
?
HO
?!
MYSELF
FIX
?
FORGIVE
ME... I
DID YOU
A GRAVE
INJURY.
WITHOUT
THINKING,
I USED
MY POWER
TO HURT
YOU.
AND NO
MATTER
WHAT YOUR
REASONS, YOU
STILL HELPED
US IN OUR
HOUR OF
NEED.
YOU HEAL
ME?
BECAUSE
ME
HELP?
YES
!
YOU'RE
ALL RIGHT,
NOW... AND
THE PAIN
SHOULD
BE GONE
SOON,
TOO.

WE DIDN'T KNOW THIS WAS YOUR FEEDING PIT. WE'LL BE MORE CAREFUL IN THE FUTURE.
WE'LL BE GOING ON OUR WAY NOW...
.....
UM... WHERE YOU WANT GO ?
RUA !! NO!
YOU UNGRATEFUL BIG MEANIE!! THIS TIME I'LL CLOBBER YOU!!
YOU WAIT !!
UH-OH

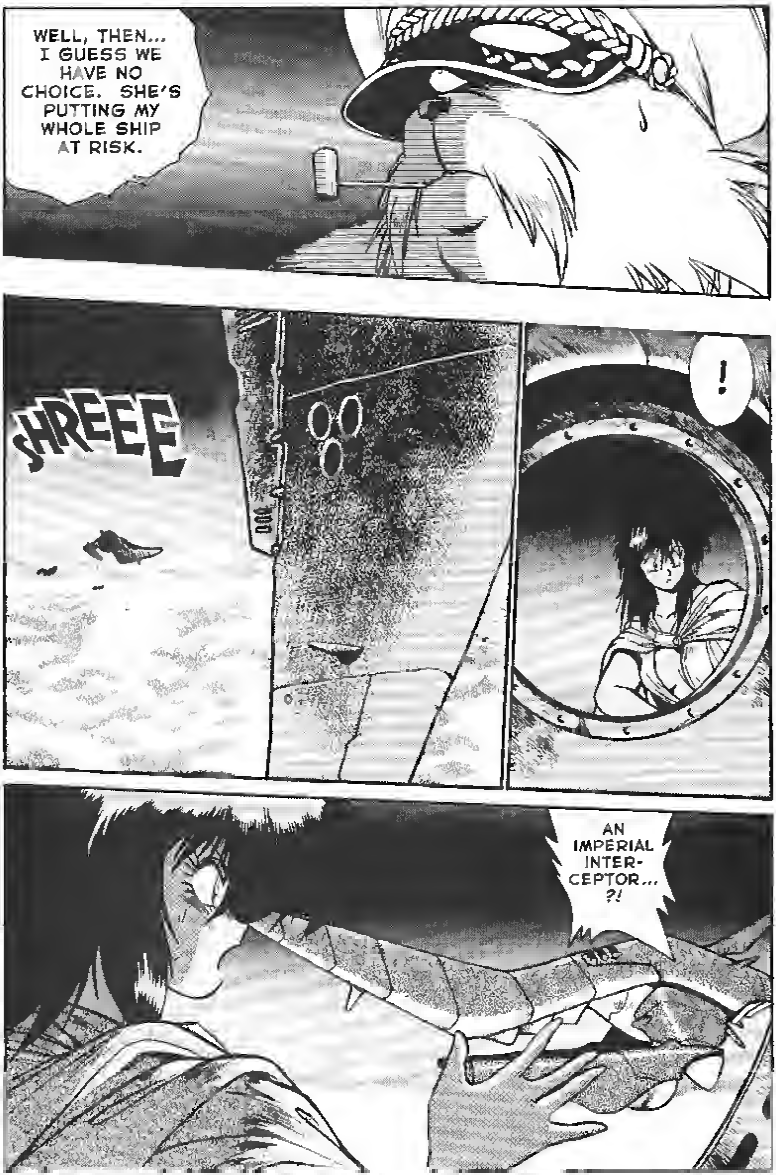
SKSKSH
YAIE!!
FWHOMPH
HA HA HA! WHAT A RUSH! THIS IS FUN!!
WOW... I NEVER KNEW THERE WERE SAND FLOWS UNDER THE DESERT!
LONG TIME AGO, THIS REAL RIVER, WATER RIVER.
NOW WATER GONE, GONE LONG TIME.
WE GO HERE, GO THERE IN SAND RIVER... ALL DESERT, WE GO.
BUT I NEVER SEE REAL RIVER... ALWAYS I SEE SAND... DRY, DRY SAND.

SKRSSSH
SKSSSHHH
THANK YOU SO MUCH...
WHEN WE GOT LOST OUT IN THE DESERT I DIDN'T KNOW WHAT WOULD BECOME OF US.
YEAH! AND WHAT A RIDE !!

MY NAME ARGUS! YOU REMEMBER ME, OKAY?!
I'M ROSALIA, AND THIS IS RUA!
AND SO, ARGUS... I HOPE WE'LL MEET AGAIN!
ONLY NEXT TIME NO NIBBLING ON ME, UNDER-STAND ?!
SKURRSSHHH!
WEIRD CRITTER, HUH ?!
JUST ANOTHER WEIRD FRIEND FOR ME... I KIND OF LIKE IT!
HEY, LOOK! AN AIR FREIGHTER !
IT'S REALLY LOW--THERE MUST BE A TOWN NEARBY!


ATTENTION... NEXT STOP, EGSON!!
WE'LL BE LANDING IN EGSON FOR REFUELING! FIFTEEN MINUTES ON THE GROUND!
GRNN
GRNN
2

CAPTAIN, SIR !!
WHAT IS IT, ROLF?
PSST PSST
!
YOU'RE SURE OF THIS?
YES, SIR. SHE'S A PERFECT MATCH WITH THE "WANTED" POSTER.
SHE'S GOT TO BE PRINCESS MINERVA !


WELL, THEN... I GUESS WE HAVE NO CHOICE. SHE'S PUTTING MY WHOLE SHIP AT RISK.
SHREEE
!
AN IMPERIAL INTER-CEPTOR...?!

SHREEE
WHAZZAT...?!
LEMME SEE! LEMME SEE!
?
"YOU ARE THE QUEEN OF NOTHING, MINERVA. YOUR COUNTRY NOW BELONGS TO KURGH!"
WHDD
HALT !!

PLEASE DON'T MOVE, MA'AM.
LOOK... IF YOU DON'T GIVE UP QUIETLY, THEY'LL BLOW US ALL AWAY!
HMM... IT'S HER, ALL RIGHT...
...PRINCESS MINERVA OF ROMUNILIA !!
PLEASE DON'T TAKE THIS WRONG, YOUR HIGHNESS.
I'M AFRAID WE'VE GOT TO ASK YOU TO DEBARK... FOR THE SAFETY OF ALL ONBOARD.
OFFICER ZEFF! GET HER SWORD!
AYE, AYE, SIR!
DON'T TOUCH ME !!
VERY WELL... NO POINT IN MAKING A FUSS.

SHREEE
SO... WHERE ARE YOU TAKING ME?
THERE'S A ROMUNILIAN DREADNAUGHT THREE MILES AHEAD. THE INTERCEPTOR WILL TAKE YOU THERE.
AND YOU DON'T THINK THERE'LL BE ANY TROUBLE FOR YOUR LITTLE SHIP?
IT'LL JUST PUT US TEN MINUTES BEHIND SCHEDULE. IT'S NO BIG DEAL.
HEH... YOU UNDER-ESTIMATE US ROMUNILIANS, SAILOR BOY.

WHAT MIGHT YOU MEAN BY THAT, MA'AM?
I MEAN KURGH WANTS ME DEAD, CAPTAIN. HE DOESN'T CARE IF I'M A BLACKENED CORPSE!
EVEN PRINCESS MINERVA'S AN EASY TARGET IF SHE'S TRAPPED ON A FREIGHTER. ONE BROADSIDE AND HIS PROBLEM'S SOLVED, YES?
YOU MEAN YOU THINK THE EMPIRE GOING TO TAKE YOU OUT--AND OUR SHIP WITH YOU?!
HEY, IT'S WHAT I WOULD HAVE DONE. DEAD MEN TELL NO TALES, EH?
CAPTAIN...?
HRKK!!
KANGG
WHRAK!

WHAM
AAGH !!
SPAK SPAK
AND NOW, CAPTAIN... !!
W-WAIT, MA'AM!! THINK ABOUT IT-- I DIDN'T HAVE ANY CHOICE, NONE AT ALL!
WE'VE GOT TWO THOUSAND PASSENGERS ON BOARD, AND I'M RESPONSIBLE FOR THEIR LIVES!
I WON'T BE ANY TROUBLE, I ASSURE YOU--JUST LET ME BORROW A LIFEBOAT.
HUH ?
IF YOU DON'T MIND CAPTAIN-- I'D LIKE TO MAKE AN UNSCHEDULED DEPARTURE !

SHREEEEEE
MMMMMM

BRT TT
BKOOM

ADMIRAL GILLUON/ PRINCESS MINERVA TRIED TO ESCAPE IN A LIFEBOAT AND WAS SHOT DOWN. OUR PILOTS REPORT NO PARACHUTE.
I WANT HER BODY FOUND.
YES, SIR!
SHREEEEEEE
MMMMMM
LOOKS LIKE THE FIGHTERS ARE LEAVING.
LOOKS THAT WAY.

I'LL BET THEY'RE ALL EXCITED OVER SHOOTING DOWN AN EMPTY LIFEBOAT. HAH...IF THEY WERE MY PILOTS I'D HAVE THEM AND THEIR FAMILIES PUT TO DEATH!
N-NOW WHAT DO WE DO, MA'AM?
IF THEIR COMMANDER HAS ANY BRAINS HE'LL SEND THEM OUT TO LOOK FOR THE CORPSE.
BETTER PUT ME DOWN AT THE NEAREST CITY.
FLANK SPEED!
AYE, AYE, SIR!
GR
NN
GR
N
N

YOUR WOUNDS ARE FINE, MY LORD. YOU'RE COMPLETELY HEALED.

YET YOU ARE TROUBLED, LORD KREITAS ?
IT'S TO BE EXPECTED... I'M SEETHING WITH ANGER! EVERYTHING IS GOING JUST AS KURGH PLANNED...
...AND ALL OF THEM, BOWING DOWN AND LETTING HIM HAVE HIS WAY!
BAM
DAMN IT ALL! IF ONLY PRINCESS MINERVA WERE STILL ALIVE!
HERE, MY LORD.
LORD KREITAS ALONE SHOWED THEM THE WAY OF LOYALTY.
I THOUGHT YOU WERE SPLENDID, SIR!
DID YOU, NOW... ?
WELL, THANK YOU, BEL'IL.

OH, HO! HITTING THE GOOD STUFF, ARE WE!
RUFUS... ?
THERE-- ONE FOR ME, TOO! CHEERS!
ARE YOU INSANE?! THERE'S NOTHING TO CHEER ABOUT!
THINK POSITIVE, MY FRIEND.
RUFUS! DO YOU MOCK ME?!
MY, MY... WHAT A TEMPER YOU'VE GOT, BOY. THE PRINCESS WON'T LIKE IT.
WHAT?! THE PRINCESS... ?
YOU HEARD ME-- PRINCESS MINERVA.
SHE'S ALIVE, YOUR PRECIOUS PRINCESS.

INTEL PICKED UP A WIRELESS TRANSMISSION A FEW MINUTES AGO "PRINCESS MINERVA GOT AWAY.' SHORT AND SWEET.
THOSE CLOWNS WERE SO PANICKED, THEY SENT IT IN THE CLEAR.
WHA...?!
IS THIS REALLY *TRUE?!* IT *IS* TRUE, ISN'T IT?! *HAH!!* OUR PRINCESS IS *ALIVE!!*
HEY, HEY, KEEP IT DOWN! WE'RE RIGGED FOR SILENT RUNNING, REMEMBER?
THIS MEANS KURGH'S PLOTS WILL ALL BE EXPOSED IN GOOD TIME...
...AS LONG AS *WE* FIND HER BEFORE *THOSE* BASTARDS DO, OF COURSE.
SHE'S *ALIVE!* RIGHT NOW, THAT'S GOOD ENOUGH FOR ME.
HMM... GOT THE HOTS FOR HER, DON'T YA, KID... ?
!!

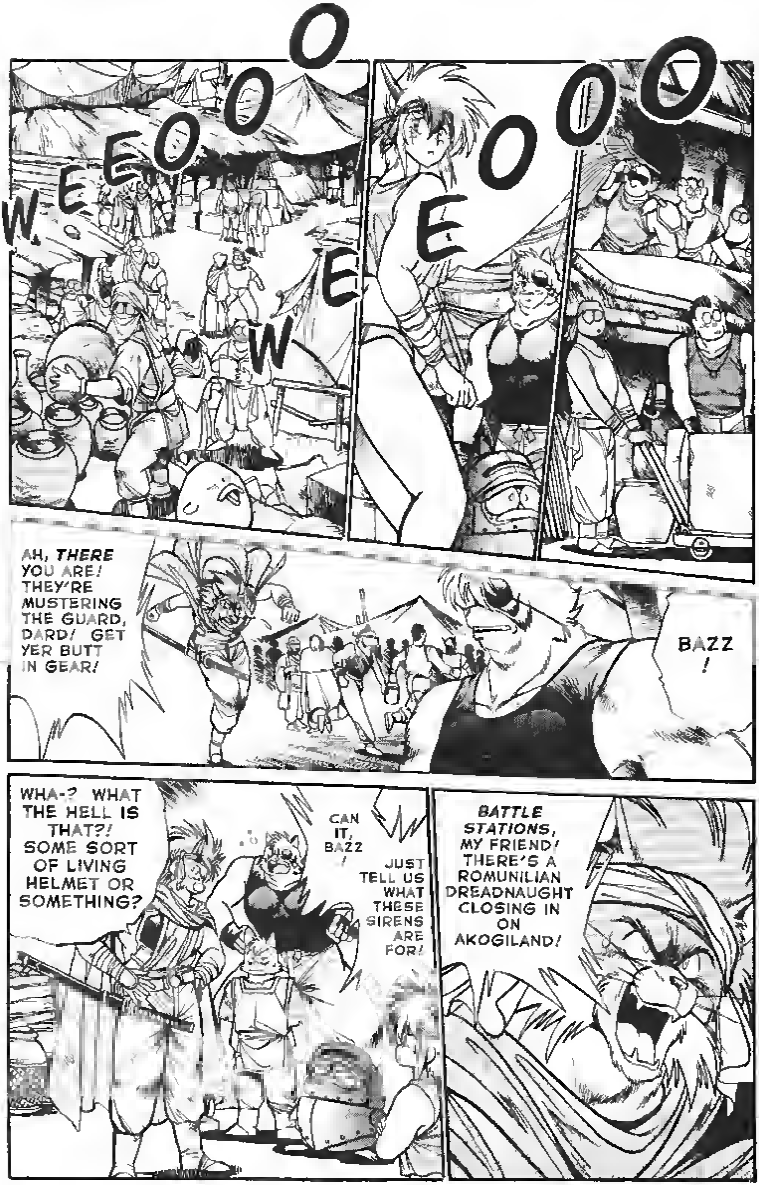
H-HOW DARE YOU EVEN INSINUATE--!! I'M OVERJOYED TO BE ABLE TO SERVE MY SOVEREIGN AGAIN! THAT'S ALL!
SO HOW COME YOU'RE BLUSHING, MY BOY ?
HEY, PRINCESS MINERVA'S A RARE BEAUTY. IT'S NOT LIKE I DON'T UNDERSTAND YOUR FEELINGS...
I SAID, IT'S NOT LIKE THAT !
HEE HEE ♡
SURE, SURE COME ON... TIME TO MAKE SOME PLANS.
SO, YOU FOLLOW? I FIGURE THEIR TRANSMISSION CAME FROM HERE, SIXTY-TWO KLICKS NORTHWEST OF THE ROSTOV MOUNTAINS.
THAT'S THE BEST I CAN DO WITH THIS SHIP'S SENSORS AND ANALYSIS SOFTWARE.
THAT'S ALL WE NEED. WE'VE GOT BEL'IL TO FIND THE REST.
BEL'IL !
I KNOW, MY LORD. I'VE RE-ASSIGNED ALL MY ORGANIC TERMINALS TO THE SEARCH.
I'M COUNTING ON YOU, BEL'IL!
AND WE'VE GOT TO MOVE, TOO!
COME ON, RUFUS! HURRY UP!
NOW LOOK AT YOU--ALL READY TO FIGHT AGAIN, JUST LIKE THAT!

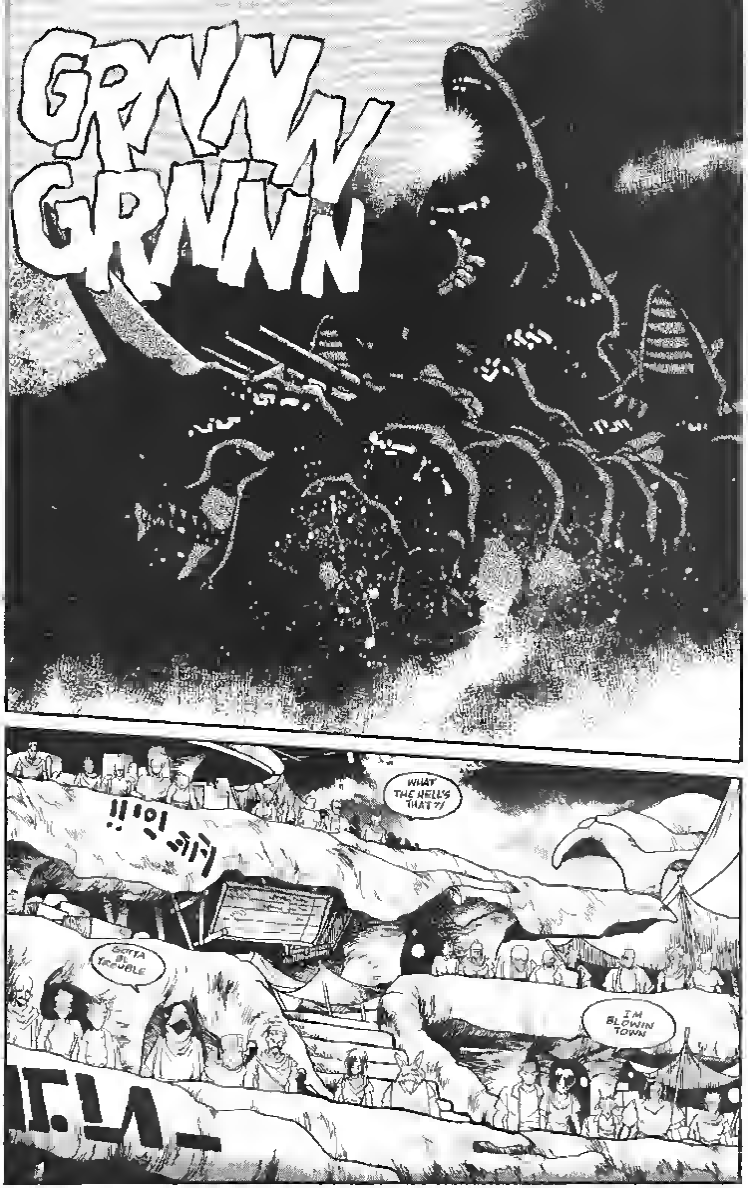
HMM...
WHAT SAY YOU, EXALTED CUSTOMER ?
THAT FINE BLADE IS MADE OF THE HIGHEST QUALITY REINFORCED TITANIUM STEEL, AND WORKED BY THE MOST FAMOUS SWORDSMITH IN THE LAND...
WHSHH
WHSST
WHSST
HYAA!!
YAIEE!

AH, I SEE IT'S DECIDED, THEN. THAT SWORD WAS MADE FOR *YOU* TO BUY, MY LADY!
FINALLY!
WRONG. IT SUCKS.
DON'T YOU HAVE ANYTHING *HEAVIER*?
MA'AM... YOU HAVE *GOT* TO BE KIDDING...!
DAMMIT, WOMAN--AIN'T YOU DECIDED YET?! HOW MANY YOU GONNA TRY, ANYWAY?
SHUT YOUR HAIRY YAP! MY LIFE COULD DEPEND ON IT, YOU KNOW!!
OR MAYBE YOU'D RATHER I JUST STAYED AT HOME LIKE A GOOD LITTLE WIFE...?
YOU'D LOOK *DAMN HOT* IN A MAID OUTFIT, BABE.
JERK!
HOW AM I SUPPOSED TO KEEP THIS BUFF BOD, THEN, HUH?
YOU GONNA GIVE ME ENOUGH OF A WORKOUT EVERY NIGHT?
HAW! THE ONLY WAY YOU'LL LOOK GOOD WITH A CARVING KNIFE IS IF IT'S ABOUT FOUR FEET LONG!
I GUESS YOU JUST AIN'T CUT OUT TO BE A HOUSE-WIFE...

WELL, I'M TIRED OF LOOKING. I'LL JUST TAKE THE FIRST ONE I CHECKED OUT.
I'LL BE BUYING HERE A LOT, SO LET'S HAVE A DECENT DISCOUNT, PAL!
FRANKLY, I'D RATHER YOU DIDN'T, MA'AM.
THERE··I'VE GOT MY SWORD, SO I CAN GO OUT WITH YOU ON PATROL!
HEY, HEY! THEY HIRED ME! YOU DON'T NEED TO COME..
HMMM... I LIKE THE BALANCE, BUT THIS GRIP...
...IT'S LIKE, TOO STICKY, IF YOU KNOW WHAT I MEAN.
I DUNNO, BABE. FAR AS I CAN SEE, YOU AIN'T CUT OUT TO BE A FISHER-MAN'S WIFE.
!
D-DON'T YOU WANT ME WITH YOU, DARD?
BUT... BUT HOW CAN I JUST WAIT AT HOME. . ?
HEH, HEH!
AW, NO PROB, KIDDO. WHEN WE'RE ALL SETTLED DOWN, YOU CAN GO TO SEA WITH ME!
BAD BOY!

HEH, HEH..
WHOA, MASAHIKO! WHAT'S THAT?!
"WHAT'S THAT," YOU SAY? THIS IS MY ARMOR! THAT FINE GENTLEMEN AT THAT STORE FOUND A SUIT JUST FOR ME!
AND HERE'S THE BILL, DARD!
COOL HUH?
WHA--?!
YOU LITTLE BLOB! LOOK AT HOW MUCH YOU BLEW ON THAT JUNK! WE'VE GOT FOOD AND RENT TO PAY FOR, YA KNOW!
BE CAREFUL HOW YOU SPEAK TO ME, SIRRAH! WHAT IS A WARRIOR WITHOUT HIS BLADE, EH?
THANK GOODNESS YOU'VE GOT SOME COMMON SENSE, CHEN!
WELL, UM...
S-SORRY ABOUT THAT, MA'AM!
WEEOOO


WEEOOO
WEEOOO
AH, THERE YOU ARE! THEY'RE MUSTERING THE GUARD, DARD! GET YER BUTT IN GEAR!
BAZZ!
WHA-? WHAT THE HELL IS THAT?! SOME SORT OF LIVING HELMET OR SOMETHING?
CAN IT, BAZZ! JUST TELL US WHAT THESE SIRENS ARE FOR!
BATTLE STATIONS, MY FRIEND! THERE'S A ROMUNILIAN DREADNAUGHT CLOSING IN ON AKOGILAND!


GRNNN
GRNNN
WHAT THE HELL'S THAT?!
GOTTA BE TROUBLE
I'M BLOWIN' TOWN!

IT'S ROMULILIAN, ALL RIGHT, BUT I'VE NEVER SEEN THAT CLASS BEFORE.
MUST BE SOME BIG-WHEEL ADMIRAL'S FLAGSHIP. IT'S SURE ONE MEAN-LOOKIN' MO-FO, TOO.
OH, SHIT! I BET THEY KNOW I'M--
BUT WHAT'S IT DOING *HERE*?
HUH?
ER, NOTHIN', NOTHING. THE GIRL'S EXCITED, IS ALL.
?
MNPH! MRFF!
ARE YOU NUTS?! THEY'VE *GOT* TO BE LOOKING FOR ME!
SHHH!!
SO WHAT IF THEY ARE? YOU PLANNING TO PUT YOUR HANDS IN THE AIR AND WALK RIGHT OUT?!
WELL, NO, BUT...

I... I JUST DON'T WANT TO CAUSE TROUBLE FOR EVERYONE... AGAIN...
HEY, I SAID DON'T WORRY, DARLIN'. I'LL PROTECT YOU ALL BY MYSELF, IF I HAVE TO.
AND I WON'T LET THEM LAY A FINGER ON THIS CITY, EITHER.
REALLY...?
I SWEAR, GIRL.
....
VRNN. VRNN

MAKE WAY!
WE'RE HERE ON ORDERS OF ADMIRAL GILLION!
TAKE US TO YOUR LEADER!
SCREW YOU, PIG!
BKAM!
STOP THAT!!
ROMUNILIANS GO HOME!
I REFUSE.
THIS REQUEST OF YOURS ANNOYS ME.
WHAT?! YOU DARE DEFY THE EMPIRE?!
WE DON'T CARE A PITCHER OF WARM DOG SPIT ABOUT YOUR EMPIRE. TAKE A HIKE.

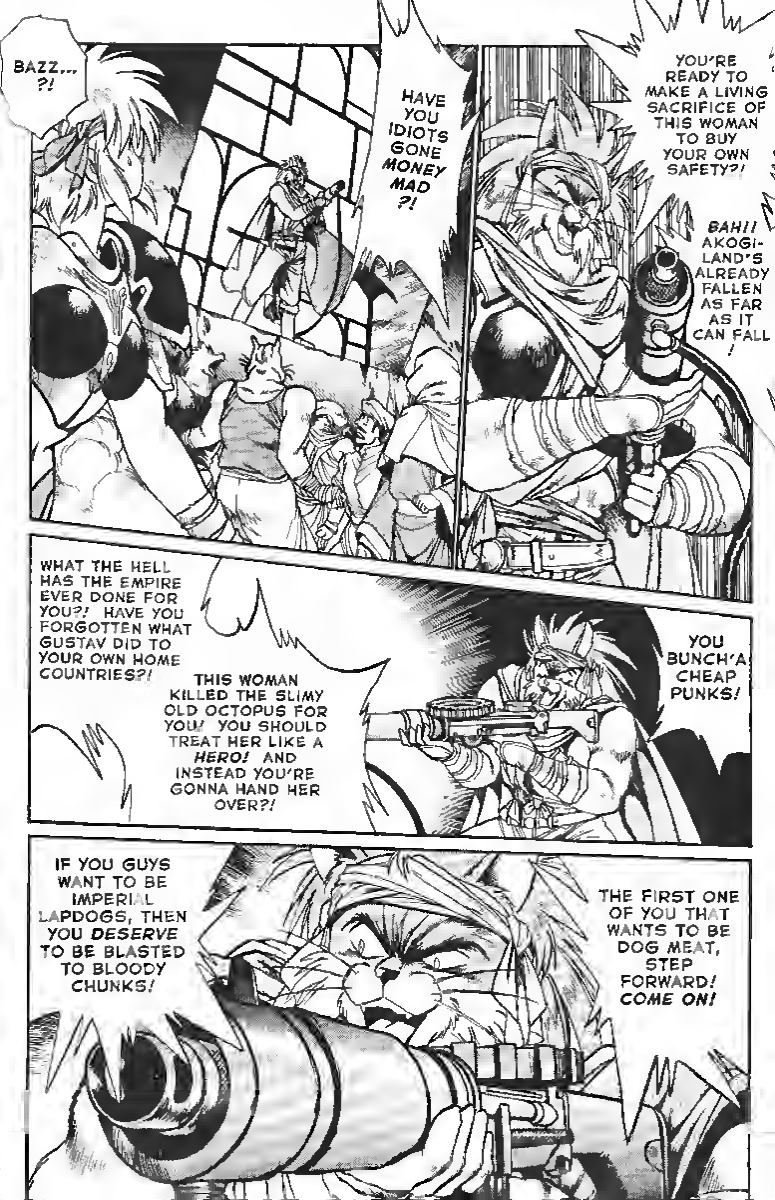
DAMN YOU!! WE'LL TURN AKOGILAND INTO A HEAP OF FLAMING WRECKAGE!
RUN ALONG, KIDDIES, OR WE'LL USE YOUR SHIP AS A HANDY GARBAGE SCOW.
WHY YOU-!!
HOLD IT! HOLD IT!
LOOK..I KNOW YOU HAVE YOUR REPUTATION TO UPHOLD. YOU ARE THE CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD OF AKOGILAND, AFTER ALL
SO WE'LL GIVE YOU THREE HOURS TO COME UP WITH A... MORE APPROPRIATE ANSWER
THE ANSWER'S GOING TO BE THE SAME NO MATTER HOW LONG YOU WAIT!
NOW...I'M A BUSY MAN. IF YOU DON'T LEAVE IMMEDIATELY, I'LL BE FORCED TO HAVE YOU DRAGGED OUT IN CHAINS.
FOOL! YOU'VE GOT A BIG MOUTH, BUT WE KNOW THAT'S ALL YOU HAVE!
AKOGILAND WILL FALL!
"A SALESMAN LIVES BY HIS MOUTH," THEY SAY.
OR WAS IT "A BIG MOUTH IS THE SOURCE OF ALL TROUBLES"...?

...AND SO, MY FRIENDS, I SENT THEM PACKING.

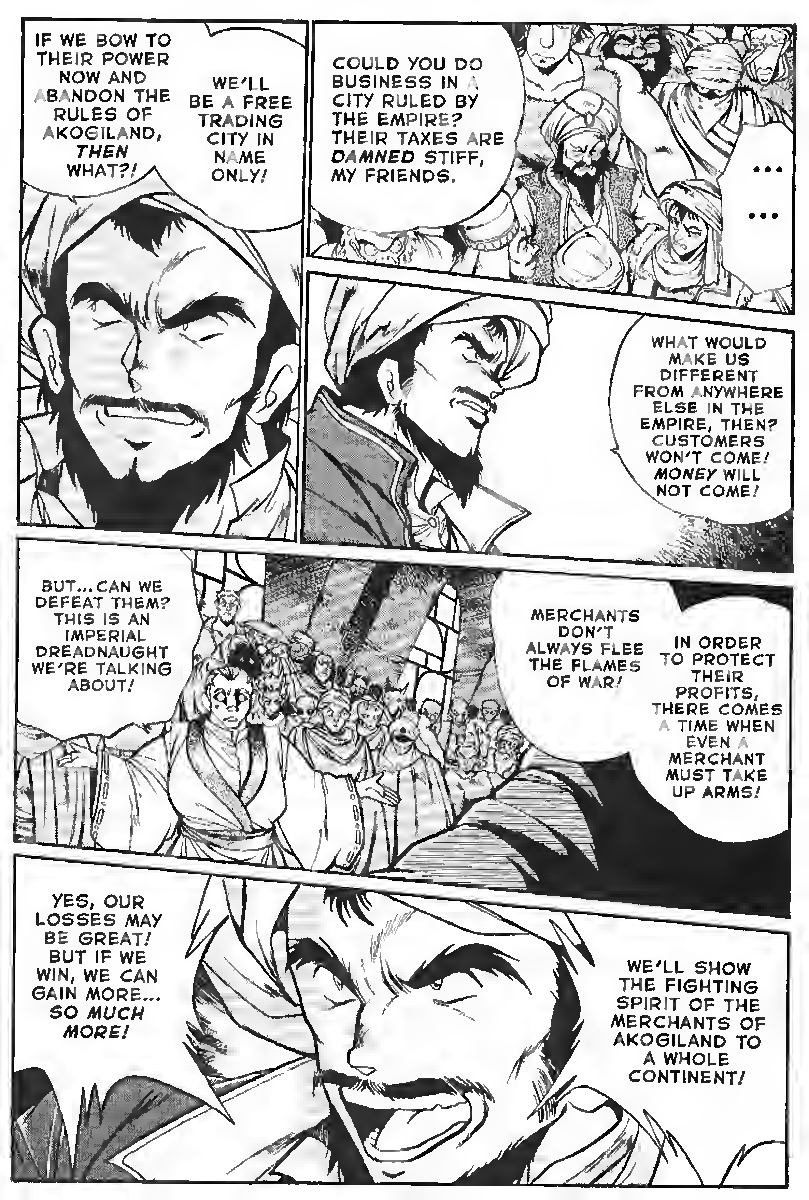
SIR! YOU MADE SUCH A CRUCIAL DECISION WITHOUT EVEN CONSULTING WITH THE REST OF THE BOARD?!
THAT'S MAL-FEASANCE!
DAMN RIGHT! WE JUST NEED TO TOSS 'EM THIS KARULA DAME AND WE WALK!
WHY THE HELL PISS OFF THE EMPIRE FOR SOMETHING LIKE THIS?!
MORE TO THE POINT, HOW CAN WE DO BUSINESS IF WE'RE BURNED TO THE GROUND?!
YOUR POSITION IS TOTALLY UNAC-CEPTABLE!
WHAT?! YOU'D SELL OUT YOUR COMRADES FOR MONEY?!
WHAT GOOD IS HONOR IF WE'RE OUT OF BUSINESS?! EH?! THEN WHAT?!
YOU CALL BROWN-NOSING THAT SCUMMY EMPEROR BUSINESS?!
ENOUGH!

I'M KARULA, THE LEDOMIAM PRINCESS THEY'RE LOOKING FOR.
KARULA, YOU IDIOT! WHAT ARE YOU--
IT'S ALL RIGHT.
GRAB HER, BOYS! THROW HER TO THE IMPERIALS!
I CAN'T BEAR TO SEE AKOGILAND DESTROYED BECAUSE OF ME!
MAYBE IT WAS ONLY A MONTH, BUT I WAS ABLE TO LIVE HERE AND FORGET EVERYTHING. THE EMPIRE, THE WAR...

KRAK
KLUD
WHAM
KRAK
YOU WANNA TAKE HER, YOU GOTTA GET BY ME, YOU BASTARDS!
DARD, STOP IT!
DON'T NOBODY MOVE!


BAZZ... ?!
HAVE YOU IDIOTS GONE MONEY MAD ?!
YOU'RE READY TO MAKE A LIVING SACRIFICE OF THIS WOMAN TO BUY YOUR OWN SAFETY?!
BAH!! AKOGI-LAND'S ALREADY FALLEN AS FAR AS IT CAN FALL !
WHAT THE HELL HAS THE EMPIRE EVER DONE FOR YOU?! HAVE YOU FORGOTTEN WHAT GUSTAV DID TO YOUR OWN HOME COUNTRIES?!
THIS WOMAN KILLED THE SLIMY OLD OCTOPUS FOR YOU! YOU SHOULD TREAT HER LIKE A HERO! AND INSTEAD YOU'RE GONNA HAND HER OVER?!
YOU BUNCH'A CHEAP PUNKS!
IF YOU GUYS WANT TO BE IMPERIAL LAPDOGS, THEN YOU DESERVE TO BE BLASTED TO BLOODY CHUNKS!
THE FIRST ONE OF YOU THAT WANTS TO BE DOG MEAT, STEP FORWARD! COME ON!

PUT DOWN THE GUN, BAZZ. I AGREE WITH YOU COMPLETELY.
CHAIR-MAN ?!
I REJECTED THE EMPIRE'S REQUEST ON MY OWN AUTHORITY, YES...BECAUSE I DON'T *HAVE* TO CONSULT WITH ANYONE!
WHAT ...?!
HAVE YOU FORGOTTEN THE CORPORATE LAWS OF AKOGILAND? ONE--*NEVER TO BELONG TO ANY COUNTRY!*
TWO--*TO REJECT NO ONE WHO COMES TO OUR DOOR!* THE EMPIRE IS CHAL-LENGING BOTH THOSE PRINCIPLES. THERE'S ONLY ONE POSSIBLE ANSWER...*NO!*
B-BUT PERHAPS WE SHOULD THINK MORE FLEXIBLY...


IF WE BOW TO THEIR POWER NOW AND ABANDON THE RULES OF AKOGILAND, *THEN* WHAT?!
WE'LL BE A FREE TRADING CITY IN NAME ONLY!
COULD YOU DO BUSINESS IN A CITY RULED BY THE EMPIRE? THEIR TAXES ARE *DAMNED* STIFF, MY FRIENDS.
...
...
WHAT WOULD MAKE US DIFFERENT FROM ANYWHERE ELSE IN THE EMPIRE, THEN? CUSTOMERS WON'T COME! *MONEY* WILL NOT COME!
BUT...CAN WE DEFEAT THEM? THIS IS AN IMPERIAL DREADNAUGHT WE'RE TALKING ABOUT!
MERCHANTS DON'T ALWAYS FLEE THE FLAMES OF WAR!
IN ORDER TO PROTECT THEIR PROFITS, THERE COMES A TIME WHEN EVEN A MERCHANT MUST TAKE UP ARMS!
YES, OUR LOSSES MAY BE GREAT! BUT IF WE WIN, WE CAN GAIN MORE... SO *MUCH MORE!*
WE'LL SHOW THE FIGHTING SPIRIT OF THE MERCHANTS OF AKOGILAND TO A WHOLE CONTINENT!

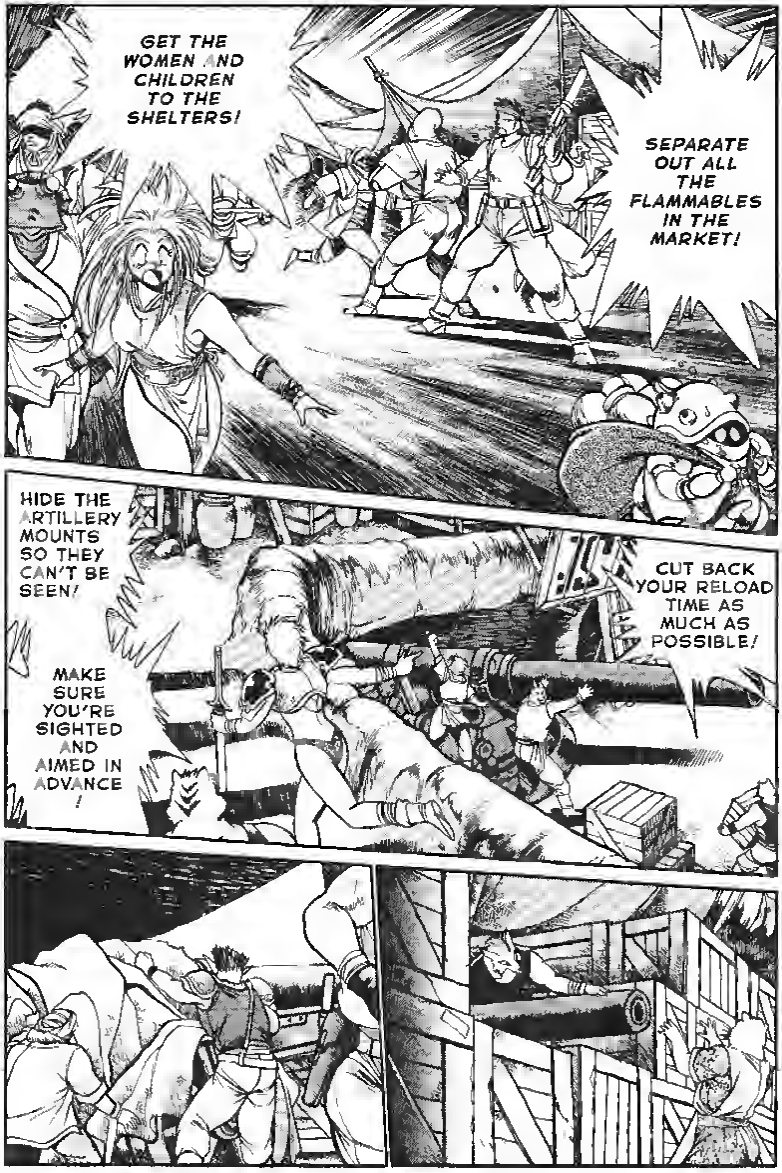
RIGHT ON!!
YAHOO!!
AND IN SUCCESS, WHAT AWAITS US?! A FINANCIAL KILLING LIKE WE'VE NEVER *DREAMED!*
$$$$
HE'S *RIGHT*... WE CAN TURN A PRETTY PENNY IF WE PULL THIS OFF!
LOCK UP YOUR CASH IN THE UNDERGROUND VAULTS. EVERY BUSINESS VENTURE NEEDS FUNDING!
YEE-HAW! TIME TO MARK UP ALL THOSE FIREPROOF SAFES I ORDERED!
WAR PROFI-TEERING... *YOU GOTTA LOVE IT!*
KARULA!
DARD!
MA'AM!
RATS... THAT RAGHEAD STOLE MY THUNDER! AH, WELL...

CHAIRMAN! THANK YOU!
THERE'S NOTHING TO THANK ME FOR.
HELL, IF WE CAVED IN TO ALL THEIR DEMANDS, THEY'D HAVE US PULLING THE HAIRS OFF OUR OWN BUTTS TO PAY THE TAXES!
LOOK-- WE'VE GOT RESISTANCE FIGHTERS AND REVOLUTIONARY ARMY LEADERS COMING OUT OUR EARS.
WOW! THESE GUYS ARE *ALL* ON THE WANTED LISTS?!
SAY, MISTER CHAIRMAN...IT SAYS HERE YOU'VE GOT EIGHTEEN CONVICTIONS, INCLUDING INVESTMENT FRAUD, BUNCO, BIGAMY...
THOSE DAYS ARE PAST! NOW I'M THE UPRIGHT AND HONEST CHAIRMAN OF THE AKOGILAND CORPORATE BOARD! OF COURSE, I HAD TO USE SOME OF MY, *ER*, "SPECIAL TRAINING" TO GET THE JOB...
LADY KARULA! YOU'RE WELL VERSED IN THE ARTS OF WAR... WE CRAVE YOUR GUIDANCE!
WAIT UP!
GOOD ONE, BAZZ! THANKS FOR EVERYTHING...YOU WERE *GREAT!*
MADE UP A BIT FOR RADOM, DID I?
YER A *STUD*, BRO!

SIR, THE THREE HOURS ARE NEARLY UP.
ANY ACTION ON THEIR SIDE?
SORT OF... THEY'RE ALL RUNNING AROUND LIKE CHICKENS WITH THEIR HEADS CUT OFF. IT'S TOTAL PANIC!
HAW, HAW, HAW! FOOLS! JUST WHAT I EXPECTED FROM A BUNCH OF SALES-MEN--ALL MOUTH AND NO GUTS!

VERY WELL, THEN! DISPATCH OUR FIGHTERS TO CUT OFF THEIR ESCAPE!
DON'T LET A SINGLE BOAT GET AWAY!
ADMIRAL...?
THOSE TWO INFORMERS ARE ASKING FOR THEIR REWARD NOW...
AIEEE!
YOW! MERCY! MERCY!
BKAM
BKAM
BKAM
WHAT THE HELL?!
ARE THEY CRAZY?!
DAMN IT, I TOLD YOU WE COULDN'T TRUST THESE GUYS!
THE HELL YOU DID!
HALT, SCUM!!
HEH, HEH, HEH...

WHERE'D THEY GO ?!
FIND THEM, DAMMIT !
SHEEE-IT!! WHAT A BUNCH OF SLEAZY, FAST-TALKING LIARS!
?!
WHERE THE HELL ARE WE...?
CHECK IT OUT-- THAT'S ONE HEAVY SWORD!
WHOA! IT'S COVERED WITH JEWELS!
THIS BABY'S GONNA MAKE US RICH!
I KNOW A GUY IN HATEIN WHO'LL BUY IT.


GET THE WOMEN AND CHILDREN TO THE SHELTERS!
SEPARATE OUT ALL THE FLAMMABLES IN THE MARKET!
HIDE THE ARTILLERY MOUNTS SO THEY CAN'T BE SEEN!
CUT BACK YOUR RELOAD TIME AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE!
MAKE SURE YOU'RE SIGHTED AND AIMED IN ADVANCE!

HURRY!
GOTCHA!
HEY... WHAT ARE YOU SO AFRAID OF, MASAHIKO? YOU USED TO BE A SOLDIER, DIDN'T YA?
I... I AM NOT AFRAID!
BUT MAYBE I'LL JUST NIP OUT FOR A DRINK TO CALM MY NERVES...
WE'VE GOT A LOT OF ARTILLERY, BUT IT'S A REAL MIX OF OLD AND NEW. YOU REALLY THINK WE CAN SLUG IT OUT WITH THEM?
WE CAN'T, NOT IN A FAIR FIGHT.
THEIR HULL AND MAIN TURRET ARMOR IS WAY TOO THICK. SOMEHOW WE'VE GOT TO PULVERIZE THEIR BRIDGE AND PARALYZE THEIR CHAIN OF COMMAND.
WE LET THE ENEMY FIRE THE FIRST SHOT. AND THEN, WHILE HE'S IN THE MIDDLE OF RE-LOADING, WE LAY ON A FULL BROADSIDE.
WE'VE ONLY GOT THIRTY SECONDS OR LESS, SO DON'T MISS!

OOF!
CHAIRMAN... ARE YOU REALLY SURE ABOUT THIS?
GET 'EM!
YEAH. WE'LL PULL IT OFF.
NOTHING TO DO BUT TRY, ANYWAY.

GRNNN GRNNN
THE TIME LIMIT HAS EXPIRED SIR!
NO REPLY FROM AKOGILAND!
A WARNING SALVO FIRST! PREPARE THE MAIN GUNS FOR FIRING!
GRNNN
GRNNN

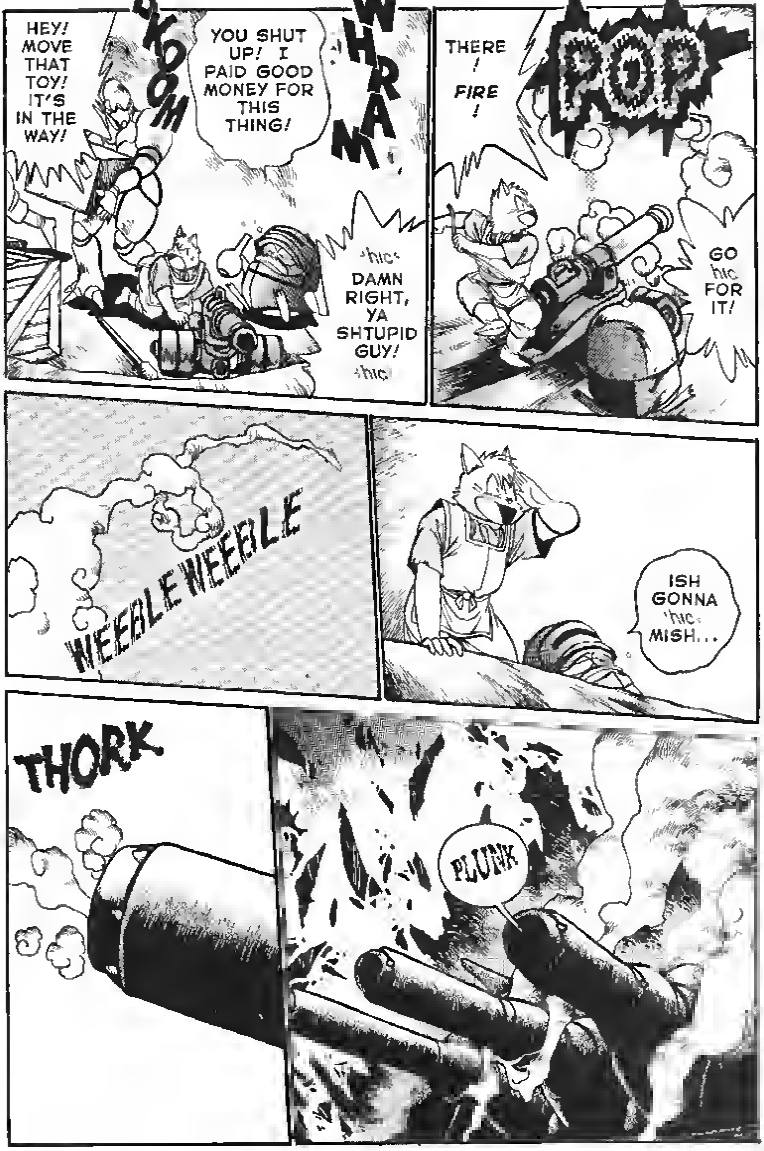
WHKOOM

SHRAMM
NOW !!
FIRE !!

HM ?!
KSHAKK
FIRE !
BKOOM
KRAK
BKOOM

B-BKOOM
BKOOM
BKAMM
FWKAM
KAEEH!

GOOD SHOOTING, BOYS!
WHOOOM
ADMIRAL !
DAMN IT!! THOSE TREACHEROUS MONEY-GRUBBERS!
NO MORE MERCY! ALL GUNS, FIRE AT WILL!
ALL FIRE CONTROL SYSTEMS DESTROYED, SIR! INCLUDING BACK-UPS!
YOU PEA-BRAIN! WITH A TARGET THAT BIG, YOU CAN HIT IT WITH YOUR EYES CLOSED!
WHKAM
DAMN THEM !!


HEY! MOVE THAT TOY! IT'S IN THE WAY!
BLOOM
YOU SHUT UP! I PAID GOOD MONEY FOR THIS THING!
WHAM
hic DAMN RIGHT, YA SHTUPID GUY! *hic*
THERE! FIRE!
POP
GO *hic* FOR IT!
WEEBLE WEEBLE
ISH GONNA *hic* MISH...
THORK
PLUNK

BULLS-EYE !!
I DID IT! ME! ME!!
hic: WHA' HAPPEN ?
N-NO WAY...
BROOOM
WHSSSHH
BOARDING PARTIES, FORWARD !

HOLY SHIT !
BUDDA BUDDA BUDDA
KAMM

HYAAAH!
WHUDD
FOLLOW KARULA, MEN!
WHOK

SHRAK
AIEE
COME ON, BOYS! DON'T RUN AWAY YET!

WHSSSH
YA HEE!
HUH?! WHO THE HELL ARE YOU LOSERS ?
KILL HIM BUT SPARE ME! PLEASE !
I I THINK I SPRAINED MY BACK!
W-W-WE JUST SHOWED THEM THE WAY HERE, IS ALL! WE DIDN'T TELL 'EM NOTHIN' ABOUT YOU, MA'AM!
WILL YOU SHUT UP, YA LIP-FLAPPING FROG!
YOU WHAT ?!
I'M HARM-LESS! I SWEAR !!
HEY... ISN'T THAT...

...MY SWORD ?!
WHROOM
WHAT WAS THAT ?!
YAIEE!
HEY, KARULA! WE GOTTA BAIL--THE DAMN SHIP JUST COLLIDED WITH AKOGILAND! IT'S BREAKING UP!
GET YOUR HANDS OFFA ME!
BUT MY BACK! I CAN'T HARDLY WALK!

THAT SWORD BELONGS TO ME, YOU SCUM! GIVE IT HERE!
WE'LL GIVE YOU ANYTHING! JUST DON'T LEAVE US!
THIS MUST BE IT... THIS ENERGY...
YES!! IT IS MY SWORD!
WHOA... WHAT'S WITH THE BABE?
CHECK IT OUT, MAN! HER EYES GOT ALL WEIRD!
MY SWORD OF POWER!

IT'S MINE AGAIN !!
KARULA...!

SHRAKK
TAKE THAT, IMPERIAL SWINE! ARMOR PLATE IS NO MATCH FOR THE COLD STONE OF AKOGILAND!

WHAKOOF
SPRAK!
SKRUNCH!

TO BE CONTINUED IN DRAKUUN PART FOUR: THE HIDDEN WAR!!